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Déjà Cresencia Bernhardt

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**RETURNING TO ANANDA**

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**RETURNING TO ANANDA**

**by**

**Déjà Cresencia Bernhardt, BFA**

**REPORT**

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## **DEDICATION**

For,  
my husband, my lovely daughter and my entire family  
who have supported me and  
given me a rich life full of stories  
to tell.

## **Abstract**

### **Retuning To Ananda**

Déjà Cresencia Bernhardt, M.F.A.

The University of Texas at Austin, 2013

Supervisor: Cindy McCreery

From the sprouting of the idea for the series to the final stages of post-production for ***Returning to Ananda***, a one-hour, made for cable-television pilot, directed by Déjà Cresencia Bernhardt; this report details the pre-production to post-production phases of its development. Included in this report are the final screenplay and various other production notes.

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## Introduction: The Sprouting of a Thought

Where does an idea for a film, or any work of art for that matter come from? And who cares? Every film I've ever made has been stolen from some personal experience from my life or someone else's who's affected mine. The harder I try not to make something about me, the more it's about me in the end. Let me say before you read one more word of this, this report is ridiculously self-indulgent.

I've come to believe that the entire process of filmmaking is wrought with self-indulgence and the mere idea that it's not is ridiculous. As much as I used to try to believe it didn't have to be, I think I was wrong. It seems the more you try to be hands off on a film, the more contrived it becomes. There's no apologizing about self-indulgence when it comes to filmmaking. Filmmaking is in my opinion, the most highly contrived form of art.

From the moment a thought is conceived until the first screening, when the filmmaker stands in the back of the room watching the finest nuances of the audience's reactions, painfully looking for some slight welling of the eyes, a gasp of shock or even the tiniest crack of a laugh as recognition for her months or years of agony. And I fucking love it.

The process of making this film, which I will refer to often as an episode because of its format, was in the end more of a personal journey in embracing compromise while taking huge risks and allowing myself to enjoy the self indulgence of my chosen art-form. This is probably the greatest lesson I'll take away from my M.F.A in filmmaking: compromise is almost everything. We work so hard to make an amazing film which we

hope people will see and love, then there is only so much we can do with limited budgets, time, experience and crew. That being said, we can make great films when we embrace those limitations if we stay true to the stories we want to tell, remembering why we wanted to tell them in the first place and stay brave enough to take risks even when we think we know it all. Which I certainly do not.

When I first began shooting film, which was actually video - not film at all - I would often turn the camera onto myself. My background is in documentary and I often found myself in my films or making a film about an issue very close to me. Every type of artist has their own way to create a self-portrait and for filmmakers it's no different. Every story I have ever told has had some element of me in it. Even if it's not a biography or even a true life narrative tale about me or my family, I'm in there somewhere. ***Returning to Ananda*** was no different.

The story of ***Returning to Ananda*** was one that I always knew I would tell. I had no idea that I would tell it in a pilot for a cable television series though. Actually, I always thought it would be a documentary. My parents, Ed Bernhardt and Robin Lim, ran away from their home in Santa Barbara California to go be with the Transcendental Meditation Movement when they were 17 years old. You know, The Beatles Guru? Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, founder of the Transcendental Meditation<sup>i</sup>Movement(TM)? *Dear Prudence?* Yes, that guy. Some would call it a cult, others a community. In 1976, I was conceived in Vitell France, where my parents worked as cooks on a teachers training course for the movement. They were so poor that they couldn't even afford to actually

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<sup>i</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History\\_of\\_Transcendental\\_Meditation](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Transcendental_Meditation)



be on the course but they thought, working on it, just being around the people on the course, would be good enough.

So, when Maharishi asked all of his followers to move to a tiny town and build a Utopia, a Heaven on Earth, where all his devotees could practice Transcendental Meditation and live in collective consciousness, my parents followed. I was just eight days old when we moved to Fairfield.

Welcome to Fairfield <sup>ii</sup>, Iowa, the picturesque tiny midwestern town that was invaded by peace-loving hippies. We lived in Fairfield for just a few years in the late 70s while my parents attended the liberal arts school there that is connected with the movement, Maharishi International University.

I was initiated into Transcendental Meditation when I was five years old. We lived on and off in Fairfield for about that many years until eventually my parents got a little older, became a little less enchanted with Heaven on Earth and we moved away. That being said, Maharishi, Fairfield and its people; meditators and townies alike, would hold a special place in our hearts forever. Like some gravitational force we seemed to eventually be pulled back there from time to time spending a few days, a few months and sometimes even a few years at a time.

Years later, I went back in my 20s and did my own undergraduate degree there, in filmmaking of all disciplines. Making this decision was pretty significant for me because although I had been raised with the philosophy of TM, I never really understood it for myself until I became a student there. While my parents and many other children came of age in the “*Dawning of the Age of Aquarius*” and fighting against

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<sup>ii</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fairfield,\\_Iowa](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fairfield,_Iowa)

the Vietnam War peacefully, I was growing up in the age of enlightenment, so to speak, and had to rebel against my own parents ideals in my own way.

Like many Fairfield kids from my generation who were born into the movement and did not find it for ourselves, we had to question the philosophy and the “rules” that we were encouraged to live by, especially as students. We had to seek out what we were searching for like any other teen and while some of us would return to Fairfield and all it’s comfort, others would leave and denounce the community forever. While I loved many aspects of the knowledge, I also rebelled aggressively against the dogmatic system that I felt I was being held to.

So, I had quite an interesting setting to begin my journey as a filmmaker. As you can imagine, we didn’t study anything in the same way as any other university on Earth does. As much as there was to complain about, like gender segregated classrooms and not being allowed to wear blue jeans, there was a community there like no other. A classroom where professors cared more about my spiritual development than they did about my academic progress, for better or worse.

If I had to sum up the knowledge that I gained there, it would be this: there is something called a unified field of pure consciousness that exists and it is bliss. We, each and every one of us, are that bliss whether we know it or not. We exist in that and it is in our true nature to want to connect back with that. Our suffering comes from not knowing that we are that bliss or being disconnected from it. This is what enlightenment is from my understanding, in a nutshell; the ability to know that we are inherently good and that we are ultimately LOVED if we can only truly believe that. The idea is that if we do believe and are tapping into that pure consciousness, we will live a life of purity and

bliss because all we will want is bliss for ourselves and others since we are all connected. There is a lot more, but this is my dumbed down quick explanation of it, what makes sense to me the most. Like every other accredited university, we studied Math, English, Science and even Film from this understanding. It's altruistic but it also rang true to me and still does.

The town was as infectious as it was maddening for me. So brilliantly bizarre and at the same time lovingly peaceful, that I forgot about the fact that it's cold as hell in the winter, it's almost impossible not to date someone that your best friend or sister hadn't because there are less than 10,000 people who live there and that with every ounce of love and peace comes all things that drive you crazy about small towns.

So, you can see why I had for years thought that one day, I would make a documentary about this Guru, this town, these people and all of my heartfelt memories of it good and bad. In fact, other's have. There is a documentary recently made called *David Wants to Fly*(2010)<sup>iii</sup> about a filmmaker whose adoration of David Lynch led him to research and make a film about Transcendental Meditation, even going to Fairfield to see what it's all about only to expose it in a negative way. That film may have had some truths, but it missed the point, the real magic, the real heaven already exists in a way already. It's not a farce or something that you have to practice everyday, it's in the smiles of the people passing by, the pitiful altruism of the old lady who believes that she will be someday enlightened, when she already is, it's in the heart of this town called Fairfield. My intention was certainly not to expose this town for it's shortcomings, nor be an advertisement for it. For all of the nonsense I had experienced there I have come to

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<sup>iii</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/David\\_Wants\\_to\\_Fly](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/David_Wants_to_Fly)

realize that Fairfield is like any other town; full of oddities that make it special and for everything I didn't appreciate about it, there were ten other things or people who make it magical.

Fast forward almost a decade after finishing my undergraduate degree. In the Spring of my second year of graduate school at University of Texas, I took a writing for series television class taught by Professor McCreery, this is probably where I first started playing with the idea of turning this particular story into a series. While I love making short films and have a deep appreciation for the craft, I wanted to try a different format for my last film in school. As I was becoming more disenchanted with tent-pole Hollywood films, and longed to create characters that had the possibility to grow with the viewer and change depending on what society was going through, I was simultaneously becoming more fascinated with series television. The new grittier, hyper-realistic, darker, sexier and even twisted-comedic directions television was going with shows like *Friday Night Lights*, *Boardwalk Empire*, *Girls*, *Weeds*, *The Big C* and *Breaking Bad* blew my mind and captured my heart. I was especially drawn to the female driven narratives in the Showtime shows and wanted to create those characters.

Telling the story about Fairfield and TM was more about when and how then about why. I always knew why I would tell it. It's a town like any other small town, and yet, it's more. It's a story about "***feeling lost in a town where everyone has found themselves***". This would later be part of our pitch, see Appendix: E.

I remember the first day of that next semester, the third year of graduate school at UT. Some of us, me in particular, presented our ideas for our thesis films. It's a big day. We had spent all summer pining over what to make the following year. There's a

ton of pressure built up for the Graduate Thesis film because for some of us, this will be the last film we will ever make. No one likes to talk about that, but it's true and it sucks. Since we're filmmakers, we pitch our ideas to each other in a casual setting in class. Our professor, PJ Raval, who I had for several classes over the course of three years has a powerful quote he's brought to the first day of every class of his that I have been in, he even puts it in his syllabus. From Anne Bogart's book, a director prepares<sup>iv</sup>:

Concerning all acts of initiative and creation, there is one elementary truth, the ignorance of which kills ideas and splendid plans; that the moment one definitely commits oneself, the Providence moves too.

All sorts of things occur to help one that would never have occurred. A whole stream of events issues from the decision, raising in one's favor all manner unforeseen incidents and meetings and material assistance, which no man could have dreamt would have come his way.

Whatever you can do, or dream you can, begin it. Boldness has genius, power and magic in it.

(Goethe)

Deciding on what to make your film about is hard enough but thinking about what to make your Thesis Grad Film about can cause major anxiety. Besides the fact that it might be your last, it better damn well be good. We've all by this point worked on numerous films and made quite a few of our own, so the pressure is on. This quote always struck me because it was the same idea that I had learned as an undergrad at

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<sup>iv</sup> Bogart, Anne; A Director Prepares: Chapter 2 Violence(Goethe). July 8, 2001

Maharishi University, just put in a different way. There is a saying in the TM community, “Support of Nature”. This basically means that if you do something and it’s good, worthy and in support of nature, that nature will support you back and that everything will manifest in the direction of progress for what you are doing. So, in my little brainwashed way, I understood this quote that Professor Raval brought and I liked it. To me, it meant, “get off your lazy ass, pick a topic to make a film about and make it. Nothing will happen if you do nothing.” It also reminded me that there were more films to be made because if we approached the process of filmmaking in this way, with fearlessness to take action, as much as we are scared about it being our last, we can be confident in the lesson that a film begins not with an idea but with the act of taking action on that idea.

My biggest reluctance to telling this story, making this film previously was that I had always wondered how I would tell it in just ninety minutes. With the limitations of the Thesis Film for The RTF Graduate Production Degree, we are not allowed to make pieces over 30 minutes, or plan to anyway. I thought, why not make a half-hour pilot instead of a short film! This would allow me to try something new and satisfy my desire to create a character that was on the screen for longer than ten minutes. So, thinking about it and its characters in a series format made sense for me and gave me the freedom to create characters that were terribly flawed but had good hearts, knowing that just because they wouldn’t move mountains in the first episode, they had the capability to do so over a few seasons. These are characters who spanned decades, their stories were not only generational but ones that lent themselves to the possibility to create real change and understanding about the way we think and feel about each other and ourselves.

So, without any more hesitation, I dove right in and I pitched ***Returning to Ananda*** as a dark comedy half-hour pilot for a series for cable television. I remember I stood up in front of my class of twelve fellow filmmakers and our professor and told them about my personal ties to the community, about how Oprah Winfrey was recently initiated into TM, how David Lynch, Jerry Seinfeld, Willie Nelson, Andy Kaufman and thousands of others practiced it and how I thought that now was the right time to tell this story to the world. I showed them pictures and clips and even asked them to listen to audio of Maharishi. They were immediately entranced and I was inspired by their interest in this topic. I thought, wow, people might actually want to see this. I also had some notion that I wanted to make something that was sexy, sleek and commercial enough to air on T.V. but heartfelt and gritty enough to still echo my own voice as a writer/director, and I thought that this show could be that. Ah, the romance of falling in love with a film in the early stages of making it.

## Chapter One: Writing the Pilot

The stories, characters and events in ***Returning to Ananda*** would be inspired by a combination of parts of many people who I knew, their experiences and some of my own experiences, but not directly my own life story. I wanted to create a character who was a total mess, one who had a long way to go. Her name is **Ananda**. Like me and many others I grew up with, she was born and raised in Fairfield and as soon as she possibly could, she got the heck out of there. She had to find her own path, but eventually she returned.

**Here is the log-line:** An erotic cartoonist, returns to the small town where she grew up, the epicenter of Transcendental Meditation, to get her daughter's birth certificate signed by the father who doesn't know that he's the father, only to realize that when she gets there, she has more than a little unfinished business to take care of.

The show was always called ***Returning to Ananda***. I named it that because the word Ananda means bliss in Sanskrit, the language associated with TM, but it's also the name of our protagonist, and for her, returning to her bliss; realizing that she is connected to herself and her community is absolutely vital to her survival and sanity.

**SEPTEMBER 2012:** I began writing the pilot shortly after I pitched it, like the next day. I diligently outlined it as I do any new project. My process usually begins with a pretty detailed bible for the show which includes a character sketch for each character and the world that they live in. This takes me about a week. I write pretty fast, even though none of it initially makes much sense or even gets used. Then I write the outline, which takes me about another week. The way I outline is also pretty detailed even in the



early stages, this seems to make it easier for me later. I like to break it into acts, then into scenes within the acts that are easily placed directly into the script document later to be expanded upon with dialogue and action. I even write slug lines and log-lines or focus lines for each scene after the slug line so that I can stay focused on what the purpose of the scene is and how it fits into the big picture. My first outline<sup>v</sup> was just that, a first outline of many. In fact I have always gone back to the outline phase and made new updated outlines after I make big changes to a script simply because it helps me get my thoughts re-organized and make sure I am on the right track.

**OCTOBER 2012:** After I did both of these things I presented them to my thesis production class and realized that there was some confusion. Things made perfect sense to me, but didn't make sense to others because this was a world I lived in and knew too well. I had no barometer for what people who were not connected to the TM community would understand, think was funny or even be able to relate to. Because of this in particular, I decided to bring on a co-writer. I asked my friend and fellow filmmaker, Britta Lundin. This was one of the best decisions I made. Working with someone who was totally objective to Fairfield and TM allowed me to write freely and then have her tell me what was working as an outsider and what wasn't. I also decided early on that I didn't just want this show to be about TM, but also a show about a girl who leaves the comforts of home and returns, it's a fish out of water show and a show about family more than anything else that should be relatable to a wide audience.

Neither of us had ever worked with another writer before so this was kind of an experiment but ended up being a very rewarding and enjoyable experience that we both

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<sup>v</sup> See appendix F

want to continue. It's like having a partner in crime actually. Britta is a great compliment to me as a writer, her keen sense of structure compliments what she likes to call my "use of many spices in a soup."

**OCTOBER-DECEMBER 2012:** I wrote the first draft of the script and sent it to Britta. That was the first time I had someone delete my own words. It's like, "what? You don't like what my character said? HUH!" And then I would do the same to her and we would go on back and forth like this for many months. It can be strange the first time you get a script back and there is a complete scene gone! Eventually, after several drafts it got to the point where we started to forget what each of us wrote or didn't write and instead of seeing what we wrote individually, it became more about recognizing what was working for the story and our drafts became more cohesive. This process carried on from about October till December of 2012.

**JANUARY 2013:** By late December 2012/early January 2013 I began showing the script to my thesis committee and taking feedback from them. Some had some serious feedback/criticism about character development which both Britta and I had worked on for so long, making it that much harder to make those changes since we had both become attached to them.

The major feedback I got was about her sexually driven career choice and about her being a likable character. This was mostly focused on whether her goal in the episode which was originally to go back and help her brother but ultimately changed to her having to return to get daughter's birth certificate application signed was enough to make her an empathetic character. Both of these issues were mulled over for months.

Ananda's original career was a pornographic novelist. I received feedback that it was hard to imagine her in this career choice so I eventually made her a pornographic cartoonist instead as it was more visual even though I think the feedback was geared toward toning her down. My inclination was to make her more sexually charged from that feedback so that instead of her career feeling tacked on, it feels like it's part of the story. Either way, the feedback about it being hard to imagine her writing novels helped me to form this new career choice which I feel in the end is more powerful and added to her colorful character.

The second major criticism, her goal to get the birth certificate was a difficult one. The goal itself came about after many many drafts. Originally it was to go back to see her brother who calls her for help because he is suicidal. The final shooting script reflects that this is one of the hooks that keeps her there, to stay and help her brother who she loves, but the simple need to get something physical done, like getting a birth certificate application signed proved very useful because it was a visual and narrative tool that drove the story forward from scene to scene.

We ended up adding a couple scenes of her life where she had been living, something I was very adamantly opposed to before but that my committee suggested and in the end I feel works. The inciting incident turned out to be that Ananda's daughter, Izzy(6), gets kicked out of school because she does not have a birth certificate, setting Ananda off on a journey to return to Fairfield, her hometown. She has to tell Izzy's father, who lives in Fairfield, that she has had his child in order to get him to sign the application for the birth certificate. At the same time, she has a burning desire to have her daughter meet her father so that she can know where she comes from,

something Ananda has always had trouble with herself because of being from Fairfield.

In the script and in production, we decided to place the birth certificate application inside a red moleskin journal, which Ananda carries around with her, so that the audience would always be reminded of it and her goal for the episode every time they saw it on screen. This little act of the red book proved to be a huge help for me as a writer and as a director.

The process with the committee was hard because I had a very specific vision for this project and I was sensitive to the directions that they wanted to take it in. I wanted to be careful that it wouldn't turn into a show that would make fun of the town or take one side because even though I knew that might be initially more sellable, that wasn't what this story was about for me and not what was in my heart. It's definitely been the burden of using real life material. There is a fine line between truth and misleading an audience, even when it's fiction, I believe there is some responsibility for me as a filmmaker anyway to at least make something that is honest to MY experience. Working with the committee ultimately proved very useful, even feedback that I didn't agree with made me work harder and think about problem areas of my script and develop character more.

**April 2013:** After about 50 revisions, I locked pages. The final shooting script is fifty pages and somehow I convinced myself and everyone else that it would still be a half-hour dramatic-comedy. I had read several other pilots such as the *Girls* pilot which was 48 pages and I thought my show was about that tone, mostly dialogue driven and would move fast. Later I would realize that my show was in fact an hour long drama, but not until halfway through production so I will address that in the Chapter on Production.

When I finally locked pages, I was already full steam ahead into pre-production so most of the changes after February 2013 were small and more about location realities and casting choices than about major structure or character development.

Looking back at the screenwriting process for this pilot, I would say the biggest challenge was to create a character who embodied the qualities that would make an audience fall in love with her and yet still have her be screwed-up enough for there to be a show where she could find herself over several seasons. The hook would be that, while as much as she hated it, this town was her well of creativity and her bi-polar brother, who she loves, desperately needs her to stay there so that he won't get brainwashed by her parents. I still don't think I will ever really know if I have been successful until I see an audience's reaction. Is it a show I would watch? Yes. After you make something and it becomes so close to you, part of you, it's impossible to be completely objective. But I think, yes.

## Chapter Two: Pre-Production

The pre-production phase officially began in about January 2013, but even sooner really. I would say I'm as much a producer at heart as a writer/director so from the moment I began typing the first outline, the producing wheels in my head were already churning. Originally I thought I could shoot in January but by October I knew that this wasn't realistic so my goal was to shoot in May before it got too hot.

**JANUARY 2013:** I began taking MFA acting classes in the theater and dance department at UT. Mostly so I could deepen my understanding of directing actors, but also partly so I could meet the talented actors there from where I suspected I might find some of the cast for ***Returning to Ananda*** and eventually I did cast two actresses from. One of the things I felt was lacking from my education as a director thus far was an understanding of what I was asking actors to do, how to get them to respond to the words on the page and ideas in my head, the way I have dreamt them. Being with actors for an entire semester began to open up my eyes to the real emotional process of acting, something I am so grateful for. My two professors there; Sally and Jim and the MFA actors who I was lucky to work with, introduced me to a whole new side of directing that made a huge impression that I think I am only beginning to just understand.

Initially, in September 2012, when I first had the idea to write the script there was an inkling of an idea to act in my own thesis but after I began writing and especially after I was enrolled in the acting classes, initially I decided definitely against that. This would also soon change. But, we'll get back to that later.

One of the decisions that I did make from the beginning was that I would actually shoot all or part of this show in Fairfield. There really is something magical and unique about this place that you cannot replicate and I wanted to capture that on screen. It was more about the characters connecting to the story by going there than anything else and a decision that would later effect the whole crew too. I'll talk more about that in the Chapter on Production.

**FEBRUARY 2013:** I took on two producers; Irene and Mystie. This was the first time I had worked with other producers and like working with a co-writer, this made the project realistic for me. This really was a huge project to take on, possibly the first pilot shot in the MFA Production Program here at RTF. One of the things I like best about filmmaking is producing my films. I go to great lengths with the tiniest details and really get into it, sometimes to the detriment of directing and I know this about myself. Working with other producers was about letting go of some of this so that I could focus more on directing.

By this time I was almost completely crewed up as well. One of my cohort, Patrick had agreed to be our Director of Photography and Emily, an amazingly talented UT student in the fine arts department, agreed to do our Set Design. We later got Claire, another UT student to come on as an additional Production Designer and she ended up being our head production designer in Fairfield as well. We were also really lucky to get a hot shot undergrad named Carmen to agree to come on as our Gaffer and she brought an amazing Grip and Electric department with her. Another one of my dearest friend's and fellow classmate from my year, Evan, who had done my sound for me on my pre-thesis film, agreed to do sound for my thesis too.

Sine the school had just acquired a new Arri Alexa, it was a natural choice to shoot on. I considered shooting on 35mm film as I loved shooting my pre-thesis on it, but I knew that we had to move faster for this project and 35mm would just slow us down too much. I also wanted to be able to shoot a higher ratio, even though we ended up with only about an 8:1 ratio which is pretty small, and with film that would have been more than I could have afforded.

Something else significant happened in February I returned to Fairfield, in real life. I went back to scout locations and while I was there I taught an advanced editing class at my undergrad University, Maharishi University, as a guest lecturer. I hadn't been back since I graduated in 2004. The town was basically the same though and teaching there was certainly nostalgic for me.

Being back in Fairfield re-inspired me to tell this story and it was important for me to do this. I visited every location in the script, photographing them for my director of photography and production designers, even though everything was covered with snow!

One of the locations that I really needed to lock was the Golden Domes. I had two scenes written that were to take place there and I couldn't see how I could replicate them. The Golden Domes of Enlightenment are where many people who practice TM in Fairfield go twice a day, every day to practice their meditation. It's where the advanced techniques of Transcendental Meditation are practiced and specifically, the TM Siddhis Program<sup>vi</sup> which includes the yogic flying sutras. The only other person I had known to be allowed to shoot inside the Domes who was not shooting something specifically for

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<sup>vi</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/TM-Sidhi\\_program](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/TM-Sidhi_program)



the movement was Oprah Winfrey<sup>vii</sup>. I knew that getting permission to shoot in the Domes would be almost impossible but I also knew that it was vital to have scenes take place in the Domes in order to tell this story properly. I ended up getting a “yes” initially to shoot in the Domes from the powers that be but in the back of my head I was always nervous that it would later turn into a no, and it did.

I also met with the City of Fairfield who was very supportive of the project. They opened up many doors for me including introducing me to a man named Bob, the owner of the local, privately owned airport who graciously allowed us to shoot in his convenience store and get all of our aerial shots from his private plane.

I also met with a man named Jerry, the owner of the Red Rock Bar, who agreed to allow us to shoot in his bar. While I was there I met with two of my mom’s best friends too, Bruce and Viktor, who would both be instrumental in helping us shoot safely in the tree that is on the property line of the house that my parents still own there. I even managed to get the grade school associated with the university to allow us to shoot the school scene in the schoolhouse even though we eventually decided to shoot that scene in Austin. Additionally, I scouted the town square, the railroad tracks and a house which we would end up using as the exterior of Ananda’s house.

The day I taught at my undergrad school, I was approached by the bright-eyed class Teacher’s Assistant and fellow filmmaker, Donald, who offered to help in any way he could, he later became our third producer, my right hand man, and a vital key in making this episode work since we filmed half in Austin and half in Fairfield.

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<sup>vii</sup> <http://www.oprah.com/own-oprahs-next-chapter/Sneak-Preview-Oprah-Visits-Americas-Most-Unusual-Town-Video>

It must have been about March that I realized that I could shoot all or most of the interiors here in Austin and the exteriors in Fairfield. Unfortunately this epiphany, like many in productions, came as a disappointment. The initial yes I got to shoot in the Domes came back as an official no once I pressed for official permission and location release agreements. In the end, I think this worked out for the best; while it would have been beautiful to film in the Domes, and someday I'd love to, it would have been hard for crew and cast with production schedules. The other issue was whether I wanted to give my script to them to pick apart or not and if I was going to film inside, they wanted to see my script, something I was not willing to do. I didn't want to have to feel uncomfortable with what I was shooting in any location or how the cast or crew could behave while inside the Domes. The scene we were filming portrays a Yogic Flying Competition and it's one of the more comedic scenes even though it takes place in a very spiritual place. I wasn't sure how this would be received.

Irene, Mystie and I looked all over for a replacement Dome but had no luck. We even almost changed the Dome to a temple and shot in a local Hindu Temple here in Austin but ultimately decided that it was the wrong aesthetic. I also felt conflicted about portraying another practice in a real working temple and had some of the same concerns about cast and crew comfortability and ability to do their jobs in a holy place as I did in the actual Domes.

Thankfully, our Production Designer, Emily Hauisein, is also an architect and agreed to build us a Dome of our own in studio 6B. I had no idea if we could actually pull it off or not but I was willing to try and Emily had a team of people who were helping

her. She managed to build about a 10th of it not quite to scale, but close enough to fake with establishing exterior shots of the real Domes.

I went back to my script and looked at all the scenes. I actually colored the script summary boxes in Final Draft, all the Fairfield scenes purple and all the Austin scenes yellow and realized that I could save a ton of money by shooting almost all of the interiors in Austin because most of the cast is only seen in interiors. I realized I could shoot all of Ananda's childhood home interiors in my own house here in Austin, the dome studio scenes and the school scenes here and wouldn't have to pay for all those plane tickets and travel expenses. That's when we decided to shoot the schoolhouse scene in Austin as well. The only interiors that we ended up actually shooting in Fairfield were the bar and the convenience store, two locations which are traditionally very hard to get in Austin.

This decision also spurred me to re-think Ananda's current home. Originally she was living in an unnamed big city like NY or Chicago but after I had decided to shoot the scenes in Austin, we changed the script to her being an artist in Austin. This helped us find a more realistic home for her because it was impossible to find a NY style flat here to shoot at, that was affordable. We traded her NY flat for a hip Austin Airstream and it added a whole new layer of life to her character, a happy accident.

**MARCH 2013:** After a few months of working with my professor Sally, also a local casting director and part owner of Brock&Allen Casting which has casted great projects such as *Breaking Bad* and *There Will Be Blood*, I asked Sally to read my script and to come on as casting director. After reading the script she passed it on to her casting partner, Toni, and they agreed to do our casting. Working with Sally and Toni would

prove to be another crucial decision in the pre-production phase that would carry out through production and even post-production in surprising ways that I never knew casting directors would be involved in.

Also in March, I would finally ask Donald to officially come on as a producer. This was significant because it was a tough decision. I knew we needed someone good to be on the Fairfield side to act as an advocate for us and to be a location fixer, but I wasn't sure if I could trust anyone from there with the script and its content. While the script showed Fairfield in a positive light, like I said, it certainly wasn't an advertisement for it either. When I asked Donald he was initially very excited. I remember telling him to not agree before he read the script and immediately sent him a non-disclosure agreement to sign before he read it. We Skyped a few days after that and the look on his face was priceless as he proceeded to tell me, with all dead-seriousness what I needed to change about my screenplay in order to make it acceptable for the good people of Fairfield. I politely told him that while I respected his opinion, the story about Fairfield was just as much mine as it was anyone else's to tell and that I would not change anything in order to please or not offend anyone. After a long talk and some deep soul searching I think he made a decision that based on what he read, the script was in fact an honest story that while fictional, shared the joys and pains of a town that might not be Heaven on Earth, but that should be given credit for trying damn hard. Donald has turned out to be one of the the biggest advocates of this show; we could not have made it without him. He was truly an amazing producer. He ended up driving down to Austin to be on set the first half of the shoot so that he would be more intuitive for the second half that we shot in Fairfield.

**APRIL 2013:** In April Irene, Mystie and I began meeting almost weekly about everything from locations to casting to food to crew. The most useful part of this process was getting my thoughts organized and having two other people to carry the burden of such a huge project. I don't think at this level you can completely let go of producing your own film, especially when you are still funding it, but it certainly helps to have others there with you through the process.

The budget to this day is a sensitive topic. I didn't do any fundraising for this film and paid for it all out of family funds. Luckily we get all of our equipment and crew and most of our locations for free and trade but there was a hefty expense to feed everyone two meals a day and to travel even though we did so very economically. I have a budget but it is not completely accurate to this day. If I were to have made this show without any trades or free equipment use it probably could have cost somewhere in the range of 75-100K even to do it on an indie scale.

Also in April, Patrick and I did a camera test and decided on a very specific look for the show too which we decided to do in camera. We used a 1/8 Black Pro Mist and #2 Antique Suede filters. I wanted the film to be reminiscent of the old photos I'd grown up with of Maharishi and the Beatles and have a slight filmic quality too, using those two filters together gave us a little bit of that look. The use of the filters may have cost us some focus at times though as it was harder to tell if we were in perfect focus sometimes. Overall, I'm glad we used the filters though. We decided to use the Zeiss Primes and the Cooke lenses that UT had, the Zeiss primes worked better in low light but we only had them for a few days of the shoot as then they were reserved by another crew. We knew we wanted Steadicam for 2 scenes so I organized this right away too.

We were able to get Patrick an awesome steadicam operator to work with us for free for the steadicam we did in Austin. We ended up hiring someone from Chicago to do the steadicam scene we needed in Iowa. It turned out that the professional was less experienced than Patrick in Austin who did it for free.

We didn't really need much else as far as rentals, a remote follow focus for the steadicam days and a couple batteries and cards but almost everything we got was from our UT equipment checkout.

I met with Donald via Skype and phone and he locked all the locations in Fairfield that I had previously scouted, getting all the releases signed. He also got additional crew for us from the undergrads who were in the film program at Maharishi University, secured our housing and planned our meals amongst many other things. We would later take on 3 assistant producers here in Austin; Michael, Christopher and Shila, all who worked tirelessly and were 100% committed to seeing the project through.

Also in April, Patrick and I spent two eight hour days a week apart making the shot-list together at a local coffee shop painstakingly deciding on a look and feel for the show. I lined the script while he write out the shots we had decided on. It became clear that we would have to shoot this project extremely efficiently and quickly. Neither of us had ever shot a narrative project this large before and we had to shoot about 3-5 pages a day, something often done on indie shoots but not often at the student filmmaking level. The biggest realization from shot-listing was that we would never return to a scene the next day. This meant that we would be shooting at least one full scene each day, sometimes 3 or even 4, but we would never have the opportunity to schedule a scene over two days or even go back to a scene if we had missed something because

of how tight the schedule had to be. We also got to decide on which rentals we would need and also finalize any equipment reservations from UT. the program allows for 12 shooting days for the thesis film and I had to petition for a couple extra days of shooting.

April was a huge month for this show as we had the initial casting as well. We decided to go SAG-Student, mostly because we had several roles for actors over 40. It's a lot easier in Austin to find great young talent that is non-union than it is to find more mature non-union talent and this is simply because of benefits. I had gone SAG for my pre-thesis film and was already familiar with the process so this was a fairly easy decision and it attracted a much larger casting pool when the breakdowns were sent out. Even though I had casting directors, I scoured the agency sites and called in people I had worked with, sending Sally and Toni a long list of people I wanted to see. I think Sally told me that it was the most extensive request list she had ever seen.

I felt sick to my stomach after the 10 hour day of casting. I literally thought to myself, who am I to judge all of these people who have spent days memorizing my script. Who am I to tell them that they are not good enough? The casting process for this show was harder I think because I saw so many young children and so many actors who I had to ask if they were comfortable with nudity. It always amazes me how giving actors are of themselves. They truly have one of the most difficult jobs and I admired each and every one of them who came into the room. Eventually, I was just as excited as I was disappointed. My mind was spinning. I knew right away that I had found an amazing Luke, Ananda's brother, and perfect fit for Izzy, Ananda's daughter. I even found a great actress to play Nancy, Ananda's mother, and had some interesting possibilities for Adams, but I hadn't found an Ananda yet. I had some really talented

actresses come in and audition but no one that me and my casting directors could agree that really understood this character. There was one actress in particular that I wanted to cast early on, but with advice from my casting directors I decided not to. A decision that I still question to this day. I think she would have done a fine job and we would have had a very different Ananda than what we ended up with, but that's what this is all about, strong choices, right?

**MAY 2013:** Around the first week of May we had our callback and that's when everything changed. After seeing a few Anandas that we had brought in from all over, we were still not convinced that we were getting the full range of character out of them that we were looking for. Mostly we had trouble finding chemistry between the Ananda's and the Adam's and Lukes that we had them do chemistry reads with. It was so frustrating that I decided to sit in and read for the Ananda's to see if I could get a better read from the Adam's that I had brought back. Sally and Toni taped those reads just like they do all of them. At the end of the day, they sat me down and told me that they had made their decision on Ananda, ME!

I was totally thrown. This was not what I had wanted or planned at all. Even though it was a fleeting thought months before, I had definitely by this point decided against it because of the scope of the project and my own ability to be involved already in producing and directing not to mention writing. Toni and Sally were adamant and insisted I go home and watch the tapes. I did and they were right, there was much more chemistry with me and the Luke, the Adams and the Izzys than with any other actress we brought in to read for Ananda. My husband also agreed and so did a few people I showed it to. I asked Sally and Toni to do a blind test and send the tapes to other



casting directors who did not know me and choose their Ananda. They chose me too. The scenes seemed to come alive while I was on camera with them whether I liked it or not. It wasn't that I was the best actress who walked in the door that day or that I was the only actress that we liked, there was simply something about this particular character that I understood better than anyone else we had auditioned and it translated to screen. Oh Lord.

When I expressed my concern about being an inexperienced actress, and Sally and Toni proposed that they come on set to be my eyes for myself, sort of like acting coaches on set, everyday. I gave myself a week to think it over and that was my time limit to decide. It was one of the hardest weeks of my life and actually extended to two weeks. When it came down to it, I was the best Ananda that we had auditioned and so I casted myself.

Because there was nudity in the role, there were many conversations with my husband and let's just say, it wasn't an easy decision that went without many conversations and a lot of heart-burn. My husband wanted me to change the role, something I was not willing to do for any of the actresses and eventually decided not to do for myself although I did tone it down a little.

Casting myself made me realize quickly that I had to now be 100% hands off producing once we started rolling. I was never worried about directing and acting, it was more about producing and acting. How could one worry about their lines or their character's emotional life and also be worrying about making sure there were enough breakfast tacos on set?

To make things harder, soon after my decision to cast myself, both of my Austin producers, Irene and Mystie told me that they would not be able to be on set for most of the time as one was leaving the country unexpectedly and one had another job she had to take and would only be on set part of the time in Austin and not come to Iowa at all. This is probably when Donald agreed to come down to Austin. I made my final casting selections and started on all the last minute details.

One of the major casting concerns was the amount of time we needed our Izzy(6). We found an actress who looks 6 but who was actually almost 13 years-old, solving a lot of our scheduling problems and since she was the natural choice anyway, it was an easy selection. Her family turned out to be as wonderful as she was to have around and are dear friends of mine now.

One of the things I felt was important was for the cast to understand the deeper levels of the people who they were portraying. I asked Devin if he was interested in learning TM and he said he was as his grandfather had practiced TM and he had known about it his entire life. One of the things Donald did was organize 2 scholarships from the David Lynch Foundation for TM initiation, one for Devin and one for an unnamed crew member. Devin was still in his last day of initiation on our first day of shooting.

The last two weeks of May were like a calm before a storm, eerie. The Dome was built in the studio and looked amazing, most of the pre-production focused around wardrobe and what was left of production design at this point. We were so well prepared that Irene, Mystie and myself began to feel like we had forgotten something. We sort of sat around with nothing left to do which gave me plenty of time to worry about acting in my own film wondering if I had completely lost my marbles. We did have

to finalize all the travel arrangements for the actors who were traveling to Fairfield and a last minute change in crew housing but otherwise we were pretty set. I asked Devin, who played Luke, Ananda's younger brother to ride up there with us on the road trip up so that he and I could bond as brother and sister.

Once we were fully cast with deal memos signed by every actor, we had an all cast read through of the script at my house giving us a great opportunity to get to know each other and everyone a casual place to ask all the questions they had about their characters and the world of the story. Wardrobe and Makeup were also invited so that they could get to measure and meet the cast beforehand too. We did no other rehearsing besides this as we had gone over the scenes so much in casting that the casting directors(my new acting coaches) and I decided we wanted to keep it fresh, to not over-rehearse. I think this decision paid off in the end.

Annie, our Assistant Director, and my dear friend, sat down with me around this time and we made a daily shooting schedule out of the shot-list that Patrick and I had previously made. I had already made a preliminary shooting schedule so that I could lock locations but we made a very detailed daily shot list schedule for each day for about half of the shoot. We were pretty tired so we only got through about half the shoot, this came back and bit me later as I spent late nights up doing this alone after a long day of shooting and acting in Iowa.

Donald arrived about a week before shooting, thank God, and since he had already been working so intensely from Iowa, he slid right into Austin pre-production and took over for me so I could really focus on directing.

### Chapter Three: Production

My goal for the shoot was this: **To have fun.** My pre-thesis film was ultimately a success and a film I love and am proud of but it was also a pain in the ass during production. I can't say that directing it was fun overall, there were fleeting moments of fun but when I see pictures of myself on set, I cringe. I have this terrible look on my face. I wanted more than anything to have fun making a film this time. I needed to see if I could actually enjoy this thing that I had spent the last three years and many more before that working towards. As a director, we spend so few days actually doing what we are trained to do, direct. Of course directing starts way before the cameras ever turn on, yes, that is true. But those few days out of the year when they do, it is supposed to be magical, right? I want to be able to cherish those precious times that I work so hard for every other day of the year.

**SHOOTING DAY 1:** Our first day of shooting was May 28th. We shot the Airstream scenes(scenes 5-9) which were almost the first scenes in the screenplay so it was a great place to start. It was a big day because we had equipment checkout early that morning and then a full day of production attempting to shoot all four scenes in one day. There were many factors too. We had a child actor who couldn't work after 10PM, nudity for myself and another character, steadicam, and we were shooting both night and day and faking evening for morning. Somehow we pulled it all off but it was a hard first day. It seemed almost surreal, there was no time to question my own acting. I knew from the start that I would not be playing back takes on a regular basis because we didn't have time for that so we developed a language on set between me, my casting

directors, our DP and our first AD. I basically looked at my casting directors and asked them if they bought my performance if I had any doubt and even if I didn't, they would give me honest feedback. From the very first day I felt like I was directing on a much deeper level. Instead of directing from outside of the scene, I was directing from inside the scene because I was physically in it. I definitely had to give up some things to do this though. I was less involved with the look of the show from the start of shooting on.

**SHOOTING DAY 2:** We moved locations to my house to shoot the first few interiors. We shot the kitchen entry scene and the bedroom scene. This was a hard day. I began to question one of the other actor's abilities as he seemed really nervous as soon as the cameras turned on, something I hadn't picked up on in the audition. This made me a little nervous as a director which was difficult for me because I was acting with him. In the end, we played his nervousness toward the scene's tension. I didn't tell him that, but that's what I was thinking anyway. I have to keep reminding myself how hard this thing is, not just for me but for everyone who I ask to do this with me.

**SHOOTING DAY 3:** We shot the projection scene and the scene when Ananda and Izzy first enter her childhood home. We didn't have to move locations and I found it so relaxing to be able to wake up on set! It was great to shoot at my own house. I was even able to save money by housing Libby, the actress who played Ananda's mother here at my house. This also proved to be a great opportunity for Libby and me to bond after the shoot every night. We spent many nights sharing a glass of wine and talking about the moms from *Fairfield*. I told her a lot of stories about them. Libby really embodied Nancy's character. I had been a big fan of hers when she played the lesbian mayor in *Friday Night Lights* the series so it was a real treat to get to work with her.

**SHOOTING DAY 4:** We shot the dinner scene and the kitchen breakfast scene.

These were two big scenes with a lot of moving parts, mainly lots of cast and a rooster! The rooster which was cast by our casting director and Irene, was amazing. I had no idea that roosters were so docile. The dinner scene was a little more complicated because of lighting continuity. The scene felt stagnant when we acted it out but I knew it would move faster once we got it into the editing room, but it was hard to believe that at the time.

**SHOOTING DAY 5:** This is the day we shot the BIG fight scene. We had almost every character in this scene in one room all day screaming at each other and acting very tense. I had to get really emotional, I had never done that on camera before so I was a little nervous honestly. Our Nancy character also had to be topless for part of the scene and get pretty teary too. It all worked out fine but also proved very difficult due to lighting continuity.

**SHOOTING DAY 6:** We shot the last few scenes in the house: the packing scene, the scene where Ananda finds out her brother is missing and the scene when she gets slapped by Heather. This was interesting. I told the actress, my sweet friend Liz, that she didn't have to actually slap me in the wides because the camera couldn't see her at that angle anyway, she said okay but when the time came I think she was so wrapped up in the moment, she hauled off and smacked me hard anyway. It was kinda crazy but almost invigorating to be physically hurt on camera. It definitely added to the whole performance of the scene. She slapped me in every take from every angle. By the time we got to close-ups my face was so swollen and red that makeup had to add a lot more blush to the left side of my face to match my right. Liz really stole the show in

this scene. She is an amazing actress, one of my classmates from the MFA acting program at UT. She stayed in character the entire day. There was a shot that I really wanted on this day that was not exactly in the style of anything else we had shot-listed but I am glad we did it. It's a long take master of Ananda packing, her hearing Heather and Adam fighting in the next room, her leaving her room and going to their room while the camera switches to her perspective as she passes it and then continues to spy on them from her POV. The camera does not cut as she is caught spying and Adam and Heather end up confronting her directly breaking the fourth wall, looking directly into the lens. The cut happens on the slap as Heather hits Ananda.

We didn't know if we'd end up using this shot but in the end we did because I feel like it adds to the obscurity leading up to the end.

**SHOOTING DAY 7:** We shot at Bridgepoint Elementary. This was a fun day for everyone I think. We had a company move from my house that morning and it was a big scene but it was a fun scene with our non-regular cast, one of the more comedic moments in the script. The mood on set definitely reflected that and we even had time for some outtakes.

**SHOOTING DAY 8:** We made another company move to Studio 6B on the UT campus where we shot the Interior Dome scenes, day and night. This was a huge day with a lot of extras and our last day in Austin. We were all pretty tired by then too on top of everything else. Donald, our faithful producer, got the flu and I was pretty worried about others having to ride in the car with him on the way to Iowa and a lot of other people getting sick too. I think that was the only time I worried about production though from the first day of shooting. The Dome scene was hard and I still to this day don't

think we fully captured the essence of what Yogic Flying is. It's much more than we could show because we didn't have real Yogic Fliers but we did have a few actors and featured extras who gave us their best shot at it. It's one of those things that still sort of haunts me to this day. Since the scene is half-comedic though we sort of pulled it off. The night dome scene was pure magic though. The performance from Ilana (who plays Izzy) was heartbreaking and will surely be one of the most memorable in the film.

**TRAVEL DAY 1:** The next day at about noon, a skeleton crew of nine of us plus one actor departed for Fairfield. We took 3 cars and an equipment van. A 16 hour drive took us about 30 hours because we were so tired and left so late, we had to stop in Kansas City in the middle of the night and the only safe place to park the van that had security was at the Casino. From the moment we left, we all felt very bonded though. It was more like going on an adventure than going to work and I think that attitude continued throughout the whole production.

**REST DAY:** When we finally rolled into Fairfield the following day, we all needed a day of rest. We settled into our hotel, toured the town, scouted some of our upcoming locations and got some food. Liz arrived for her the pond scene we would shoot the next day and we got to be roomies for a couple nights which was really fun but the next day would prove to be the hardest day, at least for me, of the shoot.

**SHOOTING DAY 9:** The pond scene: nudity, snakes and cold cold cold water. The nudity was actually very minimal but it was still nudity which makes for a tense day. There was nudity in a lot of scenes in this episode, but this time it was me! I was only actually nude for a split second running into the water on one take and was under water the whole time. We had permission to close the entire Waterworks Park down on that



day and had the entryway blocked off and people with walkie talkies guarding it but somehow, someone got word and the police showed up while I was in the water, nude. In fact when I proposed the use of the pond to the City in February, they were fully aware that there was nudity in the scene but my nudity offended a woman who worked at the park and she called the police. There were also snakes circling me in the pond during takes, it was freezing and overcast. There was also a pretty long monologue that I had to give in the scene that was difficult to memorize eloquently. The artwork that Claire drew on the sand looked great. The entire cast and crew was incredibly sensitive and supportive throughout the whole day. We had great hot lasagna and lots of great shots came out of the day. We found a way to make it look like I was nude for all the shots when in fact I was wearing a tube dress. I thought for months that I would have liked to re-shoot that scene because it was hard to act with all of the uncomfortable situations but now when I see it, I think it works and it even looks semi-sunny.

**SHOOTING DAY 10:** This was the day we got attacked by ticks, and I mean thousands of them. They were all over the side of the road and I cringe now just thinking about it. They were on every part of the side of the road so moving wouldn't have done us any good. To make things worse, this was the day we were shooting the peeing on the side of the road scene so I had to have my pants down during some of the takes. Let's just put it this way, we had a buddy system to check each other when we got back to the hotel rooms. We spent the second half of the day getting scene 11 and the driving shots into Fairfield which turned out to be something we had to re-shoot the next day because we didn't have enough space to shoot in the picture car. The shots were

unusable and most of the time we couldn't even fit audio in there. We ended up using my SUV, faking it for the tiny interior of the adorable Mini Cooper that Ananda drives.

**SHOOTING DAY 11:** We shot the Red Rock Bar interiors. We were lucky enough to get the bar to allow us to shoot in their working establishment for the entire day and into the night for as long as we needed. There were a few customers who came in and some of them even ended up signing releases and being extras. We had a great performance from Devin who did a nude scene holding another rooster who Donald had cast to match our Rooster in Austin. The roosters look nothing alike, but there's some things that you just have to go with. Devin was initially afraid, not of the nudity but of holding the rooster while being nude. This rooster was even more docile than the one in Austin, it actually fell asleep in my arms during a take and started nuzzling my arm. Our other two actors who flew in for that scene; Denton and Chris, also gave great performances. It was a long day but we had fun anyway and the scene is very dynamic.

**DAY OFF.** We took a day off to just rest and recoup since we had a long day and needed a day of turnaround. It was surreal walking around tiny Fairfield and just enjoying it. I think the crew really enjoyed it there too, the town embraced us. Since we had such a large group everywhere we went people were very curious as to who we were and what we were up to with the big camera and all the gear. I constantly ran into people that either knew my parents or that I had known from college. I definitely had some "Ananda" moments too though.

**SHOOTING DAY 12:** The Aerial shots and the tree scene. The aerial shots were rough. Patrick got out of the plane on the first go around as green as I've ever seen a

human get and was pretty sick the rest of the day. Our first AC, Nathan and one of our grips, Aaron, also went up and got to experience it.

We spent the rest of the day shooting the heart of the episode, the tree scene. The tree had been prepped for us with steps built up it so it was safe to climb, but it was literally covered with poison ivy and poison oak. We had to be really careful not to touch it. The tree was also really high, we climbed about 25 feet up at least, which made it uncomfortable for Devin to act in and hard for me to direct him up there. I hated to ask him to stay up there for as long as we did. Coincidentally, there was a work truck with a cherry-picker attached to it just parked at the house next door when we arrived and after speaking to the owner of the truck, he agreed to allow us to shoot from it. Turns out him and his wife had just been married in Bali and visited my family while they were there so they were happy to help. This allowed us to get some great shots that we would not have been able to get if not. Still it was hard to get close enough even then and the long lens(25-250mm) made it shaky. We ended up shooting on a 100mm Cooke and getting pick-ups for close-ups later here in Austin in August. There are many things I would have done differently about this scene and it was frustrating since it was such an important scene.

**This was the day that I realized that my half-hour pilot was an hour.** I remember walking on the street near the tiny house at the corner of 501 N. C and Lowe, looking up at the old oak tree and telling Patrick that I think this show is going to be an hour, not a half hour. There was something about that day and that moment that solidified the tone for me. He agreed. I always knew there was a fine line between an hour and a half hour cable show that I was attempting to make but it was the locations

that I knew I needed to build as characters that probably threw us into the hour format in the end. Instead of shows like *Girls* where the world is established, everyone knows Brooklyn. This world was not established and the audience needed to be introduced to every location just as they would a character, slowly and carefully. So, while the dialogue moved fast, the opening shots would have to be given time to digest. I started to become very worried at this point because I knew that we were not supposed to make anything over an hour but I decided not to worry too much till I got into the editing phase and figured I could make it work in the end.

**SHOOTING DAY 13:** This was a big day with a ton of moving around. We filmed the dome exteriors day, the mural in the square, the train tracks with green screen and the dome exterior night where we break into the dome which we had to fake at another location as we were asked to not film that there. We had three company moves but still managed to finish on time. The green screen stuff proved to be really tricky and the cops came and told us we couldn't shoot on the tracks so we had to move a couple times but the shots looked beautiful. The mural was a lot of fun! We got out there at about 7AM and everyone who passed by was so curious as to what we were painting on the square. They ended up leaving the mural up, we painted over the text of course.

**SHOOTING DAY 14:** Final Day! We shot half the day in the town square doing steadicam and half the day in the convenience store shooting the quickie-mart scene. The best thing about making a film in a town as small as Fairfield is that everything is 3 minutes away or less. The quickie-mart actually happened to be on the square. The weather was uncooperative that, we had some rain but we managed to get through our final day of shooting and get everything we needed. Or so we thought at the time.

Besides all the shooting we did, we also had many meals together, shared a lot of laughs and stories and made lasting friendships. There were many, many mistakes made, mostly by me I'm sure, but we all learned from them and we definitely succeeded in having fun. I think even though everyone was tired, we were all a little sad to have it end. Patrick and Devin flew back and the rest of us drove home. Evan and I stayed one extra day so that we could record the audio for the radio bit that Ananda and Izzy hear in the car at the radio station with two local radio personalities. I'm glad we got this over with there.

## Chapter Four: Post Production

I took a few weeks off before I began post production. Mainly just to clear my head and get some perspective on the shoot, but also to crew on another shoot and spend a little time with my family.

I began syncing the audio in early July, which is when it became painfully evident that I needed to work with another editor. Having written, produced, directed and starred in this show was a lot already. Editing it alone would have been tough. While I love to edit my own films, I felt for this particular project, it was beneficial to bring on fresh eyes and a new perspective. I found it difficult to not look at my physical appearance first in every shot, even if just on a subconscious level, before considering performance and even more difficult to judge my own performances.

I looked within my own cohort first but since few of us are really editors it was difficult to find someone who could leave their paying summer jobs and devote most of their summer to this project. I had a recommendation to bring on an up and coming editor named, Victoria, who wanted to work in Austin and gain experience in narrative. I sent her the script and she liked the project so we met over Skype while she was at a Sundance Lab and shortly after that we decided to work together. I think it worked out better actually that I found someone outside of my cohort since it might have been difficult for anyone who knew me to really be objective about my performances and see me not as Déjà, their cohort and friend but as a completely different character.

By the time Victoria arrived, in late July, I had the project synced, organized and ready to go for the most part. We had a small hiccup as the audio was recorded in the

wrong frame rate and frequency but after running it through a program we managed to re-sync it relatively easily. Victoria and I worked almost non-stop everyday. She stayed at my house and we ate every meal together for over a month. It was hard work but also incredibly fun. Victoria is about as blunt as they come so her perspective on the episode and my performances were really helpful.

We began by watching everything. Victoria took her own notes diligently, referring back to the script and the script notes often. The work the script supervisor, Mary Beth, had done on set was very helpful in the post production phase. After we watched all the footage, Victoria chose her selects. They were really different from mine, but this was good. Then, we put scenes together one by one, creating individual, separate sequences for each scene. Victoria liked to start with the ones that were particularly important to the story or most difficult so that we could see right away if we needed any pick-ups so that's how we began.

Early on we decided to work in Final Cut Pro 7 since that was the editing software I owned at home and was most familiar with. I wanted to be able to easily go back and make edits on my own after she left. This was a really smart decision and later I was grateful we did this. While we both know other software and earlier on I had wanted to use Avid Media Composer so that I could get better in it, I needed to be able to feel in control of my project and since Final Cut is the most intuitive for me, it made sense to work in it since Victoria and I would be editing together and I was honestly just too tired to devote a lot of time re-learning Avid Media Composer.

While we were editing, I was also working with Lee, our Special Effects Supervisor. He was working with the two plates that we shot on the train tracks for the

scene where Luke levitates. Lee ended up having to rotoscope the character out instead of working with the green screen footage that we had shot on the track because while we shot at magic hour and it was very pretty, the green cloth we used had light going through it and the atmospheric lighting made the green screen effect not work correctly.

Back in the editing room, we ended up needing pickups for the tree, the bar scene and the convenient store scenes. The difficult thing about these shots was that they were all shot on location in Fairfield, Iowa. We met with our production designer Claire to see if it would be possible to recreate these spaces and she thought we could pull it off. I wanted to get the pick-ups before the last day that my summer equipment fee expired so I wouldn't have to pay again so I scheduled them for the weekend of August 17th and spent a good 2 more weeks producing the pick-ups. This meant getting the equipment truck again. Getting the rentals again and even organizing food. It wasn't what I wanted to be doing at this point but was necessary.

We were missing close-ups for the tree scene simply because we weren't able to get close enough with the cherry picker and I think in the end there was a difference in opinion on what a close up actually is in a 2:35 aspect ratio. The tree scene was a scene where I couldn't even come down to check monitor because I was up in the tree all day 25ft above the Earth. In the editing room we realized that it was really hard to capture that intimacy that was necessary for this scene without the true close-ups. The shots we had were beautiful but we wanted to build to the heart of the film which happens in this scene and we really needed to have those close-ups. There was definitely a learning curve for me on how to communicate better with my D.P.. Things



were more difficult on Patrick no doubt since I was acting and he had to carry a lot of the burden of directing camera but these were all problems that were solvable. I couldn't have asked for a more supportive D.P., Patrick was fast and easy going and always made me feel comfortable on both sides of the camera. The 2:35 aspect ratio was problematic in general when trying to achieve true close-up singles because of the nature of the super-wide frame. It was almost impossible to frame out the other characters especially in a scene like the tree scene where we are so close and so intimate without getting right up in the cast's face, which in the end was necessary. It made it really hard to cut any lines out because you could always see the other character's mouth moving so Victoria and I struggled a lot with the pacing of this scene. I think choosing a 2:35 aspect ratio was also a bad choice on my part from the beginning. Even though it looked beautiful in 2:35 and I love this aspect ratio, since we were shooting a television show, we should have just gone with the standard format. If it ends up getting picked up we will have to crop it anyway. A very big oversight on my part as a director. Since Patrick was out of town by the time we did pick-ups he suggested we use our gaffer, Carmen, to shoot since she understood the look of the episode best. She was a great choice and came on seamlessly. We ended up shooting the pick-ups around the oak trees in my backyard and even though I'll always know they are picks-ups, most people who watch it say they don't know the difference. If I could have done that scene over again, I would have put the characters and the camera on the ground and used the bark on the trunk of the tree in Iowa to fake being up high, this way we could have gotten the camera as close as we needed it and avoided the poison

oak and the nuisance of being up in the tree all day. When we shot the pick-ups here in Austin this is what we did anyway. You live and you learn.

In the convenience store scene, we were missing a reverse of the proprietor on me. I think originally we didn't think we would need it but the only thing we had to cut to from him, was the back of my head which made no sense once we got into the editing room. The convenience store was also on the very last day so we were all spent and rushing a bit. I found a Quickee Mart here in Austin on South Lamar who was willing to allow us to shoot there for 2 hours on that Saturday morning so we made the best of our short window to get that one shot. No one has ever noticed that that shot was a pick-up. It's one that never bothers me either.

The bar scene pick-up was necessary because again, we forgot to get my medium/close-up single on the reverse of the bartender so we were forced to cut from his m/cu single to the wide which ruined the intimacy of the two characters and also looked strange. Surprisingly this shot couldn't have looked better if we had shot it in the bar itself. We did it in studio 6B. Claire made us a part of the bar that no one could ever tell wasn't shot on location from 2 bookcases and the same strung Christmas lights that we used in Iowa. There was one other shot we were missing in the bar and that was the close-up insert, almost kiss of Ananda and Adam before Luke rushes in with the rooster ruining the moment. We felt this gave Ananda more agency to be hurt when she finds out that Adam and Heather are together the next day and also heightens the tension in the bar before Luke enters.

Right before we went into pick-ups, Lee brought us the work he had done and it wasn't quite right. Even though we really shot it on location, because of the angle we

chose, the character looked two-dimensional and more like clip art than a boy levitating over the train tracks. Lee recommended we re-shoot Luke at an angle in front of a green screen and use a jib to create a more realistic effect. Carmen shot this too and it went really well. After pick-ups we gave the footage back to him to work with.

I learned a huge lesson on pick-ups that I hope I don't forget. Always book actors through their agents and get a deal memo. I had two actor conflicts come up after I had already confirmed multiple times with the actors that they could make these days. One was an actor who moved away for another job the day before the pick-ups were scheduled and one who almost had to shave off his beard(that he had when we shot the tree scene) for an industrial that he was committed to. While the actors both had good intentions, if I had booked through their agents, the agents would have known about these conflicts and we would have not had them come up at the last minute. Another lesson learned. We ended up having to cast a stand in to replace Adam's lips and chin in the close-up almost kiss shot but no one can tell it's not Adam!

We also ended up shooting one new thing, this was the only scene that was never in the script. It's a short montage, where Izzy and Ananda sing a song together in the car as they depart Austin. We felt that we were missing that moment where mother and daughter connect and this scene definitely helps that. This was the only thing we shot that was not in the original script. Since Carmen was not available on this day we had to again find another camera operator and luckily Therese, a recent RTF grad and one of my favorite TA's was in town. Therese did an amazing job with this scene and it really turned out to be a really beautiful verité-like gem in the episode.

The edit in general went by the script mostly. We played with placing the opening title credit sequence at different places but ultimately decided it book ended the show nicely so we left it at the head of the episode.

After we finished pick-ups we edited them in and started playing with temp music. We had a rough cut by around the 31st of August. It was 57 minutes long and it didn't feel like we could cut anything out to Victoria or I. We screened the rough cut to Professor Raval and another filmmaker who had never read the script and got some good feedback and made some small changes before Victoria departed for New York. Some of the changes we wanted to make were just not possible because we didn't have the footage but some of them were. We had to remind ourselves that we pulled off a huge project in a very short amount of time with very limited resources. The main kind of feedback that we were looking for here though was about length and confusion. We needed to know if they thought we could shorten it and no one thought that was possible. Even though it was 57 minutes, it felt more like 40. We would have had to basically cut the episode in half because no one scene could be cut out because of the way it was written. If we had cut the episode in half, it would have just been a bad episode because Ananda would not have accomplished her goal.

With Victoria gone, I took time away from the edit and focused on my feature writing class I was newly enrolled in and working on films for others who had crewed for me. I also went back to Iowa to teach at the brand new David Lynch MA in Film at Maharishi University and showed them a couple rough scenes. Our producer, Donald, finally got to see the rough cut too and that was a great moment for me. it was nice to

see him proud of his hard work, I had a scenario in my mind that he might see it and regret working on it but in fact it was the opposite.

Victoria returned for 2 days in mid October and we showed the edit to Cindy, my thesis supervisor, then did a semi-picture lock that weekend prepping it for color and sound design.

In October I was given a chance to pitch ***Returning to Ananda*** at two different festivals in pitch competitions. I went to New Orleans and pitched it as a feature since that's the only format they allowed and won second place. This was a 5 minute video pitch and we were allowed to show 2 minutes of video. It was really fun!

Then, later that month, since the screenplay for ***Returning to Ananda*** was chosen as a Second Rounder at the AFF festival, Britta and I got to attend the festival and pitch in their 90 second pitch competition together as Second Rounders. We won first place at the first round of competitions and then went on to the finale which we didn't win but did very well in. This was a **great** experience. I would recommend every new director/writer sign up for pitch competitions, they force you to think about your film and say it all out loud. It was really fun to pitch together and helped us to think about what we needed to work on as far as future episodes and professional pitching to networks if we ever get the opportunity.

I screened that cut to the rest of my thesis committee on October 30th and got some more feedback from them. It was a lot of the same things I had heard from the script that I thought had been fixed so it was a little frustrating but I went back and re-edited the fight scene and added a bunch of ADR per their suggestions. I think these

changes were over all good. I didn't use all of them but most. The pacing of the fight scene feels different now which I am not 100% sure about but it's a compromise.

Within days of that, I picture locked again and then went into color and sound design. Dan, a former RTF grad student, did the color and Rui, an RTF exchange student, worked tirelessly on sound design.

The color was an interesting process as I feel I still have a lot to learn about how to talk about color. I didn't initially feel like our first pass was creating the mood we needed in the tree scene and it was difficult to match those pick-ups for both color and sound but on second pass I felt better about it. I am still not convinced we respected the antique suede filter we used.

By the time we colored, Lee had brought back the new material with the new special effects and it worked much better than the original shots. It still amazes me that the stuff we shot in the studio actually looks more realistic than what we had shot on location. I'm still pondering whether to use the final shot or not in the episode. I think it could work either way, but I know I'll miss it if I take it out.

Meanwhile, while all of this was happening, our First AC, Nathan, who is also the composer for the episode, was working tirelessly on a score. It took many, many meetings to get a sound that we were both happy with but Nathan came up with some beautiful themes. We started to talk about the characters as individual musical scores, each one having a sound of their own, emoting a disparate emotion. By the time we got to the final scenes we wanted Luke and Ananda's themes to collide representing what happens on the train tracks. I also had music to use from my brother Hanoman, my Step-father Wil Hemmerle, a great local band, the Bright Light Social Hour, a Michael

Franti song that Ananda and Izzy sing in the car, and two amazing songs from Iron and Wine. The last three bands are all artists I know so what we didn't get permission to use for free, I got for very cheap.

The score is one thing that I really wish we had a year to work on. Nathan did such a good job but it was hard on him and he lost many nights of sleep. It was difficult to see my friend suffer like that and then have to ask him to push himself harder when I was totally satisfied. At one of our meetings I asked him to totally scrap what he had been working on for an opening and just listen to his heart. What he made in the end was really magical and worth all the sleepless nights.

We began the final mix with my favorite mixer, Brad, on November 12th, Rui was still working day and night on sound design and Nathan was still finishing up some of the themes when we went into the Pro Tools 5 mixing room.

There were a lot of problems with the mixing room so right off the bat, we got off to a slow start. I knew we would go over the school's allotted 3 days that they pay for but Brad and I were thinking 5, not 8 days would be what it would take us to finish and I knew I would have to pay for the rest out of my own pocket.

At some point he asked Rui to start cutting dialogue in Pro Tools 4 just to speed things up and that was a big help. We were sure we would finish on the 7th night even though we knew we would be up all night but at about 2AM Brad told me he thought we were starting to come to a point of diminishing returns and he offered to give me a free day if we could stop and start again the following week. I'm glad he did because we were all so tired none of us could hear straight anyway and outputting would have been a nightmare at that point.

We ended up picking the mix back up when the room was free again that following Tuesday and it was a lucky decision because the actor, Devin, who we mostly needed ADR from was out of town and he ended up coming back into town the day before we picked back up. He came in with the flu and did 35 minutes of ADR like a pro. The new ADR was so good that we decided to re-record all of my lines in the tree too at the last minute.

The tree scene ended up being the most manufactured scene in the entire episode. From location to time of year to pick-ups to ADR to color and sound, almost none of it was what was originally shot or recorded.

Brad and I ended up playing with a lot of Nathan's music cues, we used themes and parts of themes in places he didn't originally intend for them and it was fun to re-imagine what he had created, working it into Rui's cool sound design. He gave us stems and his blessing to do so, so we got really creative. We only ended up not using one of his themes, the one that he had made for Sam. We placed another Iron and Wine song for this instead. That scene tended to drag so the popular Iron and Wine song lifted it up.

Brad and Rui were so patient with this final process, making the episode come to life.

The only piece that is still being worked on today are the credits which Lee is also doing. We decided that we did not want any title cards at all up front and only the title: ***Returning to Ananda*** would come up after the opening sequence. Lee is working on an elegantly animated title that is sort of charcoaled onto the screen as if Ananda is creating a piece of art of her own. After the final image in the episode we will do simple



static title cards for major department heads before the outtakes begin and then scrolling credits for cast, then the rest of the crew and then all of the thanks and music throughout the outtakes and the rest of the black while the final song is playing out. Although I wore many hats on this project: writer, director, producer, and even actor, there was a plethora of talent who generously gave to this project and the credits will reflect that this was not a show that I by any means made alone.

## **Chapter Seven: *Returning to Ananda*, The Self Curving Back on Itself**

In just a few short days I screen the final version for my thesis committee and then screen it for the University on the 15th of December. Even though there are so many things I would have done differently, I am still astonished at what we have accomplished.

I've learned so much from every film I've made before and during grad school, but this film was like no other in that it almost existed as a work of creative intelligence of it's own. Like a snowball, sometimes it felt as if it was making itself. It's like that quote that Professor Raval brought to class.

Making the decision to make a film affects your life greatly, not just professionally but also personally and unlike many other disciplines in school, it truly is all encompassing. As much as I've enjoyed the years here back in grad school, there were many things that I had to put on hold to do this. We tend to think that we are not just filmmakers, but we are almost saving lives with our films. We become so wrapped up in what we are doing that almost nothing else seems to matter. Personal and natural disasters could happen around us and we continue to turn the wheels of production. Maybe it's because it truly is a miracle that any film gets finished at all. As much as it's cliché, these really are our dreams, thought of, fantasized about, written down, produced, acted out, recorded and then carefully crafted into a form that someone else out there might be able connect to. The process from script to screen of this film (pilot) was a voyage of voyeurism of myself, constantly referring back to the myself, the 'me'

that I feel is ever-connected to everything else, over and over and over. All the while wondering, what is it all for? And who wants to see this damn show anyway!

The message of the episode for my character, Ananda, was to realize that she was truly connected to everything else and if she would only just realize that she was that pure love, happiness, bliss would be ever-present for her. My dream for this show is for someone who needs to hear that message, that they are loved and that they are truly connected, will hear it. We make movies to be entertained. People get lonely and need to connect, so maybe actors do have the hardest job in the world, they have to be that for so many people who need that connection.

What happens with this pilot now? Good question. What happens with any film made in film school? Most live out their short existences in film festivals. There is not much of a film festival life for one hour pilots though, we all know that. My intention was never for this to be a festival project, although I will submit it to the few T.V. festivals that exist. I'll also probably submit it as a feature film to festivals which have a shorter total run time submission length qualification on the off-chance they'll take it. The truth is, it's too long to be a short film, by about 40 minutes, and it's too short for most festivals to be considered a feature film; not to mention, it ends in a cliffhanger. My plan is to write a more complete bible for the show with my co-writer, Britta. This bible will include: a season arc, a better detailed world of the story and better, updated character sketches than the original bible that I had created in the very first phase of this project had. With this, the screenplay for the pilot and an edited down version of the pilot episode, we will pitch it to networks and distributors who program or stream content like ours. My dream was always for ***Returning to Ananda*** to end up on Cable or Netflix so I'll work towards

that big goal and continue to write and make other films in the meantime. This was a huge undertaking and most people don't shoot a pilot for many reasons; it's expensive and networks who do pick up already written pilots usually want to re-cast and re-shoot them anyway. I made this because I had to make a film this year for my thesis and I wanted to try something different. There are other possibilities besides HBO, Showtime, AMC or Netflix: independently produced webisodes, Hulu, Amazon and many more. My producer Donald and I will spend the next several months exploring all of those opportunities that I haven't had time to explore while I've been in film school. In other words, the work has just begun. A really smart woman told me early on in this process, making a great show is only half of the battle, the other half is getting into the door to tell someone about it.

So, back to my greatest film school lesson: compromise is almost everything. It really is. We don't have all the money or all the time, the resources and certainly not the experience to demand perfection from ourselves or each and everyone who donates their valuable time to help us make our dreams. It's been more about working really hard to produce the best films possible, choosing talented people who believe in your vision and then being willing to compromise on set when necessary so that those amazing friends of yours will come back and help you tomorrow and even more importantly, still want to be your friend. After we wrapped in Iowa, many of the crew members told me that they hoped that ***Returning to Ananda*** gets picked up so that we can make more episodes together. I really hope so too.

RETURNING TO ANANDA

Pilot

by

Déjà Bernhardt

And

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1 EXT. AERIAL ABOVE FAIRFIELD, IOWA - DAY 1

AERIAL VIEW: a tiny, picturesque Midwestern Iowa town complete with a gazebo in the town square, an old clock tower, and a courthouse.

The sound of a distant train creeps in. We see the old set of railroad tracks which cross through the center of town.

And on the edge of town... TWO GIANT, BEAUTIFUL, GOLDEN DOMES with Indian adornments on the tops stands out of place.

2 EXT. RAILROAD TRACKS -DAY 2

On the tracks below, A HANDSOME YOUNG MAN (19), sits cross-legged with his eyes closed, meditating. A look of perfect contentment on his face as the tracks vibrate gently.

Slowly, he leaves his body and begins to levitate a few inches off the ground.

Then suddenly, the jarring BILLOW of a train.

CUT TO:

3 INT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - CLASSROOM - AUSTIN - DAY 3

ANANDA (26), artist type, hot, but out of place, sits on a child's desk in a 1st grade classroom across from TWO OTHER MOTHERS (40's) with boob jobs and Botox.

A silver-haired FEMALE TEACHER (60) removes an abstract charcoal rendering of an orchid from the wall.

BOOB JOB MOM  
That's it!

BOTOX MOM  
Sinful.

TEACHER  
Okay ladies. This isn't a stoning.

Ananda takes the drawing, turns it upside down and cocks her head.

ANANDA  
It's so... Georgia O'Keefe. First place huh? What was the contest?

TEACHER

The "Art Meets Science" Fair.

In the corner, THREE 6 YEAR-OLD GIRLS play in a playhouse kitchen. IZZY (6), who clearly belongs to Ananda, is being ignored by the other two.

BOTOX MOM

Izzy's idea of "art" is not what we want our daughters exposed to when they come to school.

ANANDA

I take it your daughter was the runner up? Anyway, it looks like a flower to me.

BOTOX MOM

That's certainly what the judges must have thought, but your daughter told my Morgan that it's not an orchid, it's a blossoming... a blossoming...

(stuttering)

Vu-vu... VULVA!

Ananda can't help herself, she bursts into LAUGHTER.

TEACHER

Thank you ladies. I need to speak to Izzy's mother alone now.

The teacher leads the mothers over to fetch their daughters. Ananda can hear one Mother whispering to the teacher.

BOOB JOB MOM

(whispering)

She'll be suspended, right?

ANANDA

(talking to their breasts)

Oh, gimme a break! At least she's anatomically correct!

As the other mothers walk out of the room and the teacher comes back to Ananda, Izzy pours herself a cup of pretend tea alone.

TEACHER

You know we adore Izabell...

Ananda picks at her fingernails, covered with dried paint.

ANANDA

This is my fault. I'm an artist...

TEACHER

I'm afraid it's more serious than that, Ms. Evans. When I pulled Izabell's file, I discovered you have YET to produce her birth certificate, which we asked for at the beginning of the year. It's May...

Ananda, at a loss for words, checks on Izzy again.

TEACHER (CONT'D)

I'm afraid if you can't produce it, well, I just legally cannot allow her back to school until you bring it.

ANANDA

Oh my God, you're caving into those Botoxed-up Supermoms?

TEACHER

I'm sorry, my hands are tied.

ANANDA

She doesn't have one yet, a birth certificate.

(beat)

I need her father's signature to get it.

TEACHER

We have quite a few students who don't have a father. It's nothing to be ashamed of.

ANANDA

Izzy HAS a father.

Ananda stands up, walks over to Izzy and takes her little hand.

Hand in hand, Ananda and Izzy walk down the empty hallway.

IZZY

Did I get you in trouble?



4 CONTINUED:

ANANDA

Not at all.

Izzy stops and pulls on her mom's hand. Ananda bends down to receive a kiss. Ananda smiles sadly at her sweet little girl.

5 INT. AIRSTREAM - AUSTIN - NIGHT 5

5 Inside a re-done retro-cool Airstream: 5

Izzy sleeps soundly in her bed under a decorative mosquito-net, surrounded by little colored string lights. Tiny charcoal drawings dot her walls. The door to her room in the Airstream is cracked open and outside...

6 EXT. AIRSTREAM - AUSTIN - NIGHT 6

...the Airstream sits in a quiet, Bohemian-like yard complete with a garden and more strung lights.

Ananda sits behind her easel sketching A BEAUTIFUL, NAKED, AFRICAN AMERICAN FEMALE MODEL (28) who straddles a pillow atop a large outdoor bed covered with pillows.

The drawing looks like something from a Playboy cartoon. In it, the pillow has been replaced by a replica of the same woman.

Empty bottles of wine and clothes are strewn around. Ananda keeps one eye on Izzy sleeping soundly inside.

ANANDA

She really loves that damn school, it's just the other moms get under my skin, you know?

MODEL

Hey, I'm no fan of fake moms, but it's not their fault you don't have your papers in order. Just get the damn birth certificate.

ANANDA

If you don't have a father's signature, your kid's assumed to be illegitimate, or from donated sperm.

MODEL

So what?

ANANDA

I think it's important for a child  
to know who she belongs to.

MODEL

What, did you grow up without a dad  
or something?

ANANDA

No, I had the opposite problem. Did  
you?

MODEL

Why, because I do porn? I happen to  
like what I do.

Ananda considers her drawing and thinks.

ANANDA

Okay, turn towards me and, could  
you act like you're fucking the  
pillow now?

The model LAUGHS, getting on her hands and knees.

MODEL

Like this?

INT./EXT IZZY'S BEDROOM/AIRSTREAM - DAY

BUZZ. BUZZ. Ananda and Izzy are cuddled up in Izzy's bed,  
under the mosquito net, together.

With her head still buried, Ananda answers her phone.

ANANDA

Hello?

MODEL (V.O.)

Where'd you run off to?

ANANDA

Hey. I got in bed with my daughter.

MODEL

I see that...

The model stands in the doorway. Ananda jumps up...

8 EXT. AIRSTREAM YARD - DAY 8

... and closes the door behind her before Izzy wakes up.

ANANDA  
8 You should probably leave before 8  
she wakes up.

Crossing through the yard, Ananda walks the model towards the gate, they pass several life-sized erotic charcoal drawings including the one from last night.

Ananda opens the gate for her.

ANANDA (CONT'D)  
I'll find you on Facebook?

MODEL  
Wow, Is that what this was? You're  
the real deal!

The model points to her naked chest. Ananda takes off her shirt and hands it to back, awkwardly.

Ananda, topless, smoking hot, closes the door and stares back at the airstream and the mess from last night in front of it.

9 INT. AIRSTREAM - AUSTIN 9

She enters the airstream, walks over to a bookcase, takes out a leather bound red moleskin and opens it.

Inside is an application for a birth certificate.

**Father's Name: Adam Taylor    Signature: \_\_\_\_\_**

10 EXT. SIDE OF THE HIGHWAY - MORNING 10

Ananda stands on the side of the road behind her Maxima, and presses "Luke" on her cell phone.

A photo of the young man from the train tracks appears.

Izzy, hair a mess, pants around her ankles, squats on the ground next to her trying to pee.

IZZY  
I told you, I don't have to.

ANANDA

Just try harder angel, I don't  
wanna stop again till we get there.

Ananda puts the phone between her shoulder and ear and squats  
to pee with Izzy. Their bare butts show from behind.

Suddenly the line answers and Ananda perks up.

ANANDA (CONT'D)

(into phone)

Yeah, it's really me.

(Beat)

Actually, I'm coming to town, could  
you gimme Adam's new number?

A semi zooms by and HONKS. Ananda flips it off. Izzy flips it  
off too, with the wrong finger.

ANANDA (CONT'D)

(into phone)

Of course I wanna see you, Luke.

That's why I'm coming home.

(beat)

Kind of... Just gimme his number  
would you please?

The line goes dead.

ANANDA (CONT'D)

(under her breath)

Little Dick!

IZZY

What's a dick?

ANANDA

(caught off guard)

It's um... a rare species of hybrid-  
hairless Chihuahua that makes funny  
faces at you when it has to pee.

Izzy makes a funny face.

IZZY

I have to PEE!

Izzy giggles quietly as her pee flows onto Ananda's feet.

Ananda stands up mooning the interstate.

ANANDA

Izabell!

Yellow (mm/dd/yyyy) 8.

10 CONTINUED: (2) 10

Izzy laughs and jumps into the car closing the door. Ananda laughs and runs after her.

11 INT. ANANDA'S CAR - DAY 11 \*

Endless fields of corn, grain elevators, and soybean farms. \*

**INSERT TITLE: *Returning to Ananda***

IZZY  
Have I ever been to Fairfield?

ANANDA  
No, thank god.

IZZY  
How long are we gonna be there?

ANANDA  
Not long babydoll, not long at all.

Izzy plays with the radio as they pass a sign:

**WELCOME TO FAIRFIELD: Population 9,646**

A warm, VOICE fills the car, methodically, with angelic bass.

MAHARISHI MAHESH YOGI (V.O.)  
The path to enlightenment is  
through knowledge of the 'self'...

IZZY  
Who is that? GOD? \*

ANANDA  
(laughing)  
No, that's Maharishi.

IZZY  
Who?

ANANDA  
Maharishi.

IZZY  
I love his voice.  
(beat)  
Is he my Dad?

Ananda laughs loudly.

ANANDA

Definitely not! And don't do that thing, asking every guy you meet that, okay?

- \* \*
- \* \*
- \* \*
- \* \*

Izzy shrugs, then plugs her nose.

IZZY

Oh no, what's that smell?

ANANDA

Iowa baby. Hogs and corn.

Rounding a corner, AN ENORMOUS GOLDEN DOME WITH INDAIN  
ADORNMENTS on top comes into view.

\*  
\*

ANANDA (CONT'D)

And *Nag Champa*.

IZZY

Whoooah!

\*

IZZY (CONT'D)

What is that? A space ship?

ANANDA

That's The Golden Dome of Enlightenment.

Izzy cranks her neck and stares as they pass slowly.

RADIO ANNOUNCER #1 (V.O.)

Remember tomorrow's the big flying competition folks.

RADIO ANNOUNCER #2 (V.O.)

That's right Dennis, I heard a rumor that Oprah might be coming?

RADIO ANNOUNCER #1 (V.O.)

I heard it was Clint Eastwood.

## RADIO ANNOUNCER #2

Could be the two remaining Beatles?

# RADIO ANNOUNCER #1

Jerry Seinfeld...

RADIO ANNOUNCER #2 (V.O.)

At a minimum, David Lynch...

11 CONTINUED: (2)

11

RADIO ANNOUNCER #2

Honestly, with TM as popular as it is now, it could be anybody! You know, even Judd Apatow does TM.

RADIO ANNOUNCER #1 (V.O.)

It's the Oprah effect, Jim.

They turn into a neighborhood with oddly similar Stepford-ish houses, all with Indian adornments on their roofs. \*

RADIO ANNOUNCER #2 (V.O.)

Transcendental Meditation is a household phrase people and Fairfield is the epicenter of enlightenment!

Ananda clicks off the radio as they pull into a driveway. She smooths down Izzy's hair. \*

ANANDA

Welcome to Fairfield, honey, don't believe everything you hear here.

12 INT. ANANDA'S CHILDHOOD HOME - ENTRYWAY - DAY

12

Ananda cracks open the front door. The entryway looks as if a Hindu Ceremony exploded in it.

ANANDA

Hello? Luke? Mom?

A framed giant picture of an Indian Sage with a small plaque that reads: Maharishi Mahesh Yogi hangs on the wall above a burning stick of incense. Izzy stands in awe starrng at it.

Ananda picks up the stick of incense and puts it out just as NANCY (50's), bright and cheerful, an aging hippy with money, enters wearing shrouds of white cloth and covered in grease from head to toe.

NANCY

Ananda, what a blissful surprise!

ANANDA

Hi, Mom.

They embrace sweetly, Ananda avoids the oil.

NANCY

Excuse the oil! I just finished my Abhyanga Massage.

Nancy is tearful.

NANCY (CONT'D)  
I can't believe you're here!

ANANDA  
Neither can I.  
(serious)  
Mom, I love you, but mom, I go by  
Amanda now.

Her mom lets go and grabs her face into her hands inspecting her like a little girl.

NANCY  
That's ridiculous, sweetheart.  
(seeing Izzy)  
And YOU, you must be my only  
grandchild! Look how beautiful you  
are!

\*  
\*  
\*  
\*  
\*

Nancy scoops Izzy into her arms, spinning her around.

IZZY  
Why did you call my mom Ananda?

\*  
\*

NANCY  
That's her name, dear! It means  
bliss, it's the most beautiful  
Sanskrit name in the world! We can  
give you a new name too.

\*  
\*  
\*  
\*  
\*

Nancy looks her granddaughter over.

NANCY (CONT'D)  
Hmmm... You look like an *Anjalie*.

\*

Izzy's eye's light up.

ANANDA  
No, she doesn't.

\*

IZZY  
*Anjalie*...

\*  
\*

NANCY  
It's been so long, I really didn't  
think you'd come for the wedding.

ANANDA  
What wedding?

Ananda takes another look at all the decorations. Oh no!



12 CONTINUED: (2)

12

NANCY  
(like a little girl)  
Mine. I'm getting married!

ANANDA  
Again? Who is it this time?

Nancy dances into the kitchen spinning Izzy, Ananda follows.

13 INT. ANANDA'S CHILDHOOD HOME KITCHEN - NIGHT

13

ADAM (28), handsome, gangly, enters from another room just as they do. He's sweaty and shirtless. \*

Ananda looks like she's seen a ghost. \*

ANANDA  
Oh god, please no! \*

Nancy sets Izzy down and laughs, taking tea cups from the cupboard. \*

NANCY  
Please, Ananda. This town is small,  
but I'm not about to start marrying  
your ex-boyfriends. \*

ADAM  
Nandy! Oh my god, it's you. \*

He hugs Ananda. She closes her eyes in his embrace.

When she opens them, Izzy is looking up at her, whispering. \*

IZZY  
Mama, is he... \*

Ananda shoots her a look, she shuts up. \*

ANANDA  
Good to see you, Adam. \*

ADAM  
You too. \*

Ananda looks at Izzy, eagerly waiting to be introduced.

ANANDA  
Adam, this is Izzy.

Adam crouches to look Izzy in the eyes. Gives her a grown up handshake.

ADAM

Hello, Izzy. The pleasure is entirely mine. I've been friends with your mom since we were your size.

Ananda watches as Izzy meets Adam. He let's go of their handshake and picks her up, hugs her gently.

NANCY

But now he's going to be your Uncle!

ANANDA

What the fu--

NANCY

Ananda, watch your language. Adam's father and I will be married this weekend.

Nancy shoves a cup of tea in her face.

NANCY (CONT'D)

You don't get to judge, when you don't come home for six years!

ADAM

Makes us step-brother and sister?

ANANDA

Gross. We'll be gone before then.

(to Adam)

Can I speak to you, in my room?

Ananda stands frozen in front of her old room, A HAND PAINTED RIOT GRRRL POSTER, of a naked Punk Rocker, wearing a guitar stares back at her. Adam walks up behind her.

ADAM

I left most of your stuff up. Just added some of my stuff.

Ananda is speechless. She enters the room. On the walls are many life sized drawing, more subtle and beautiful than the ones in Austin, but with a sense of humor.

ADAM (CONT'D)

Spent so much time in here, it  
woulda felt weird to move into any  
other room in the house...

Adam follows her in. Ananda walks over to a wall of photos:  
Ananda, Adam and another girl having fun in a photo booth as  
teens. Another of just Ananda, peaceful, in meditation.

ANANDA

Why are you even living here?

ADAM

It's just temporary. I'm building a  
house a few miles outside of town.  
Your mom insisted.  
(he takes a photo off)  
This was always my favorite.

Ananda takes it from him.

ADAM (CONT'D)

If it bothers you that much, I  
won't stay here...

Adam pushes her hair out of her face.

ADAM (CONT'D)

I don't want this to be weird for  
you.

Ananda inhales deeply, entranced by the sexual tension.

Izzy bounds in and grabs the photo from Adam's hand.

IZZY

Mama, you're so pretty!

Izzy, compares it to one on the wall: Ananda wearing black  
eyeliner and a death glare.

\*  
\*

IZZY (CONT'D)

Except in this one...

ANANDA

Hey, I liked that look.

ADAM

I remember those days.

They both laugh.

Just then, LUKE walks into the room wearing a PINK TUTU. He slyly gives Izzy a "shh" and comes up behind Ananda, picks her up and tackles her onto the bed.

\*  
\*

ANANDA

Luke!

LUKE

Izzy, my favorite niece, come tickle your crazy mom with me!

Luke laughs as Izzy jumps on them.

IZZY

Hey! I'm your only niece!

He kisses her all over. Izzy screams in delight. Ananda smiles for the first time.

LUKE

And I'm your ONLY uncle.

IZZY

Then how come I never met you before?

Luke gives Ananda a look.

ANANDA

(intercepting)

Nice dress Luke.

IZZY

It's a tutu, I like it.

LUKE

Yes, it is. Thank you, so do I.

ADAM

I'll let you guys catch up. I gotta take off anyway. Ananda, you guys should stay in here, I'll crash in the guest room.

ANANDA

Wait, I need to talk to you. Will you meet me at the Red Rock later?

ADAM

The bar?

Ananda gives him a *please* look.



ANANDA

Just don't change her name, or  
initiate her, or anything, Okay?

She catches her mom's eye.

ANANDA (CONT'D)

Okay?

NANCY

All right, all right.

Nancy begins to carve a large bird.

IZZY

TUUUUUR-KEY! Yum!

NANCY

Even better. It's Tofurkey!

LUKE

(to Ananda)

You feed her flesh?

Before Ananda can respond Luke storms out in tears.

ANANDA

Luke! What's wrong?

Ananda get's up to go after him, Nancy stops her.

NANCY

Leave him honey. He'll be fine.

ANANDA

He's taking his meds right?

NANCY

Doesn't need them since he's been  
meditating regularly. Did you know  
he's flying at the Dome now?

ANANDA

Please, no movement lingo, Mom.

NANCY

This is normal, the closer one is  
to enlightenment, the more refined  
their physiology becomes. He feels  
the pain of all those poor animals.

(beat)

It's absurd we don't cry.

15 CONTINUED: (2)

15

Ananda rolls her eyes.

NANCY (CONT'D)

Oh my GOD, you're here! YES! That means you can see him in the Yogic Flying competition tomorrow. He's gonna kick butt.

ANANDA

I thought those things were supposed to be demonstrations, you're like a crazed pageant mom.

NANCY

This is serious Ananda, people are talking, saying that YOU'RE brother may be the first enlightened person in two decades.

IZZY

Whoa.

CRAIG (60), uptightly clean-cut, enters.

CRAIG

Look who's here! Last time I saw you was when the police brought you down from the water tower.

Izzy gives her mom a weird look.

CRAIG (CONT'D)

And you must be Izabell!

Craig kisses Nancy. Nancy pinches his butt. Ananda gags. Craig takes over carving the turkey.

CRAIG (CONT'D)

So, Ananda, what are you up to these days? They still let you teach at the Art Institute?

ANANDA

Actually, I'm working as a cartoonist for a magazine.

IZZY

(matter of factly)  
Bitch Rag.

Everyone looks at Izzy shocked.

15 CONTINUED: (3)

15

ANANDA

It's an online porn journal. You've probably heard of it, Craig?

NANCY

Couldn't you use your creativity for something more satvic? Why always the nudes?

CRAIG

I'm not surprised. Same old Ananda.

ANANDA

Well, luckily, you're not my principal anymore, Craig.

NANCY

Okay, you two. Let's eat this bird.

Ananda stands up to leave.

ANANDA

You guys enjoy the Tofu-turkey.

Ananda kisses Izzy, then looks at her mom.

NANCY

(crossing her heart)

No mantras, I promise!

16 INT. RED ROCK BAR - NIGHT

16

A townie bar, neon signs and all, totally the opposite of the Fairfield we've seen so far.

At the bar, Ananda lights a cigarette and pulls out the RED LEATHER BOOK containing the birth certificate application.

The bartender, ETHAN (27), heartbreakingly attractive in a flannel shirt sort of way, checks her out.

ETHAN

Sorry dude, you can't smoke in here.

ANANDA

Since when?

ETHAN

Ananda? Wow, it's you!



ANANDA

I'm not going by-- Oh fuck it.  
Hey...

\*

ETHAN

Ethan. Middle school? I helped you  
in shop class, we made that stool  
that you used to break into the...

ANANDA

Ethan. Of course.

There's a moment between them.

ETHAN

So, where have you been all...

Adam enters, interrupting, he's cleaned up, looking good,  
sits next to Ananda.

Ananda sets her hand on the leather folder on the bar.

ADAM

Hey.

ANANDA

Hey.

(turns to Ethan)

Can we get two...

(spotting something)

Oh, shit is that Kombucha on tap?

ETHAN

Yeah, it's Meditator Mondays in  
here now. You want one?

ANANDA

Fuck No! Gimme us 2 Sierra Nevadas.

ADAM

None for me. I can't stay long. I  
got meditation bright and early.

ANANDA

So, it's weird about our parents.  
How did you let that happen?

ADAM

Small town, what can you do? Seems  
like everyone gets together at some  
point. Speaking of which there's...

The song on the jukebox changes. Purple Rain. They lock eyes.

ANANDA

Okay, I didn't put that on, swear!

They both laugh, he grabs her hands in his, playfully.

ADAM

If we ever had a song, this was it.

Adam wraps his fingers around hers and pulls her up to dance. She laughs, but accepts. They slow dance.

ADAM (CONT'D)

The hot shot returns.

ANANDA

I'm not really a hot shot.

ADAM

No? You did everything you said you would. Left all of this behind. That was your dream right?

Ananda half smiles.

ADAM (CONT'D)

And your daughter, I don't even know when that happened, but she's beautiful. I'm happy for you.

Ananda stops dancing.

ANANDA

Adam?

Ananda picks up the leather folder.

ANANDA (CONT'D)

You know the last time I visited, when Luke was in the hospital? What happened between us?

ADAM

(bashful)

Of course I do.

Their eyes meet. Ananda can't look away, her breath catching.

Ethan watches Ananda as he washes glasses behind the bar.

She puts the folder down.

ANANDA

I missed you.

They move closer. It's an intimate moment. Maybe they'll kiss when...

LUKE

Ananda!?

Luke has burst into the bar. NAKED, distraught, cradling a GIANT ROOSTER.

LUKE (CONT'D)

(to patrons)

Have you seen my sister?

ANANDA

Luke! What are you doing?

Ananda rushes to him. Adam follows. Luke thrusts the rooster into her arms.

LUKE

Isn't he beautiful? I saved him from the Poultry Farm to remind you what beautiful creatures they are!

ANANDA

Oh, Luke.

Ananda takes Luke into her arms with the rooster.

ANANDA (CONT'D)

I'm so sorry.

Luke buckles over, ashamed. He starts sobbing.

ANANDA (CONT'D)

It's okay, it's okay.

Ethan appears, slipping an apron onto Luke.

LUKE

(sobbing)

I couldn't find a turkey...

ANANDA

(whispering to Ethan)

Thank you.

(to luke)

Come on sweetie, let's go home.

She turns to Adam.

16 CONTINUED: (4)

16

ANANDA (CONT'D)

Can we meet at our spot tomorrow? I  
really need to talk to you.

ADAM

I gotta work most of the day...

She looks at him desperately.

ADAM (CONT'D)

I can be there around lunchtime.

Ananda walks out with Luke and cock. Purple Rain continues.

17 INT. KITCHEN - MORNING

17 \*

Izzy sits on the counter and pets the rooster perched next to  
her. Nancy feeds Izzy lentils. \*

Ananda enters the kitchen dressed in old tattered jeans, flip  
flops, and a loose fitting white tank top with no bra.

NANCY

Morning, angel! Tea? \*

ANANDA

Coffee? \*

Ananda kisses Izzy.

ANANDA (CONT'D)

(to the rooster)

You again.

ANANDA (CONT'D)

Mom, can we sit down tonight, talk  
about Luke? He needs our help.

NANCY

Let's not overreact dear.

ANANDA

That stunt last night, not cool! He  
was NAKED.

NANCY

He was in the tub when he had the  
premonition, and you know what?  
Pretty intuitive if you ask me.  
They would have slaughtered this  
poor dear had he come two minutes  
later.

IZZY

*Arjuna*, we named him *Arjuna*, mama.

ANANDA

Well, I call him "*lunch*".

Izzy smacks her lips.

Nancy jumps up onto the counter like a monkey and sticks her head into the cupboard reaching for teas in the way back.

ANANDA (CONT'D)

(whispering to Izzy)

We'll leave soon, I promise.

IZZY

Can't we stay for Grandma's wedding?

Ananda's eyes get big and she shakes her head no.

NANCY

(head in the cupboard)

Vata Tea, Kapha Tea... Oh, I know what you need! Pitta tea, your Pitta is completely imbalanced!

ANANDA

I think you're mistaking Luke's being bipolar for enlightened, mom.

NANCY

Luke is experiencing higher states of consciousness, Ananda. You think that's easy? Besides, I don't trust those western doctors who diagnosed him. He's seeing an Ayurvedic doctor now.

Nancy hops down.

NANCY (CONT'D)

Every genius in history was called crazy at some point. Even Einstein.

ANANDA

I hate it when you use that example.

The teapot whistles, Nancy takes it off the stove.

17 CONTINUED: (2)

17

ANANDA (CONT'D)

Please don't make me tea, mom. I  
gotta do some things in town, I'll  
get a coffee on my way.

(then)

Just make sure Craig isn't here  
tonight. I'm inviting Dad, and  
Craig will just spook him.

(to Izzy)

You okay here Sweet Pea?

Izzy picks up a marigold from a bowl filled with them.

IZZY

I'm helping grandma get ready!

Izzy sniffs the flower. Nancy smiles.

NANCY

Maid of honor?

\*

ANANDA

Okay. I'll be back this afternoon.  
But...

\*

\*

NANCY

I remember. No names.

Ananda gives Izzy a kiss. As she leaves, Nancy turns to Izzy.

\*

NANCY (CONT'D)

Vata tea?

\*

Izzy giggles.

\*

18 INT. QUICKIE MART - DAY

18

Ananda pours herself a coffee at the local Quickie Mart,  
clearly not a meditator establishment.

THE PROPRIETOR (50), PAKISTANI, comes out of the back room  
and begins stocking the cooler.

ANANDA

Excuse me, does Heather still work  
here?

PROPRIETOR

(strong accent)

Are you kidding? She's like a total  
meditator now.

ANANDA

Heather McCarthy?

PROPRIETOR

That's her! Those meditating  
monkeys stole my best employee. I  
leave Pakistan to get away from  
India and India follows me here!

Just then the door opens and SAM (50's), a worn-hard man in  
need of a haircut, enters.

SAM

Nanda, was hoping I'd run into you!

They embrace.

ANANDA

Hey Sam. I was gonna come see you.

SAM

It's okay, I heard you were here,  
gotta love a small town.

(then)

To be honest though, I didn't even  
consider that you'd show up for  
your mom's big shindig.

ANANDA

I'm not here for that cluster-fuck.

The proprietor holds up a six-pack of beer.

PROPRIETOR

Was just stocking these for you,  
Sam. They're not quite cold yet...

SAM

All the same temperature on the way  
out.

The proprietor hands him a big gulp cup.

Ananda give Sam a look as he cracks open a can and pours the  
warm beer into the cup.

Ananda and Sam walk through the square. Sam pushes his red,  
rickety bicycle, six pack in the basket.

SAM

It's been too long.

ANANDA

Yeah, but besides Luke, you're the only one I really want to see here anymore.

SAM

Ah, don't be too hard on your mom, she loves you so much...

ANANDA

Still attending those cult recovery meetings?

\*  
\*

SAM

You kidding? I love those meetings. Hot, old hippy chicks, all that pent up sexual tension. It's like the 60's all over again!

\*  
\*  
\*  
\*  
\*

ANANDA

Ha! My mom should go.

SAM

So, if you're not here for the wedding, what brings you back then?

ANANDA

You know that little creature I've been sending you pictures of for the last six years?

SAM

Oh Man, she's here too!? You know, you were that age when your mom and I got married. Great age. I'm gonna get her something special.

Ananda grabs the red moleskin with the birth certificate papers out of her back pocket and shows it to Sam.

ANANDA

I gotta get this signed or they won't allow her to go back to this school that she's crazy about.

SAM

Sounds like you got a good reason to be here.



ANANDA

Well, I met up with Adam last night and tried to tell him but...

SAM

You're still into him.

ANANDA

It's dumb. This town makes me do stupid shit, Sam.

SAM

Nah, you got Izzy.

ANANDA

Yeah, and I just want her to have a father, so she knows where she belongs in this fucked up world.

SAM

I didn't think that sort of thing would matter much to you.

ANANDA

It does. I know from experience how that shit can fuck you up.

It's too late, it came out. Sam takes a swig and it's quiet.

ANANDA (CONT'D)

Sorry. I didn't mean...

SAM

It's okay, it's the truth. I was a terrible father. But, between me and your real dad... Maharishi...

ANANDA

AND I'm about to have another one -- Craig! Ugh, this town is so fucking incestuous.

SAM

...but you turned out alright. The important thing is that Izzy is loved right?

ANANDA

I guess that's just it, I want her to know that she is worthy of love. But trying to tell Adam that... It's just so much to say.

They stop at the gazebo in the middle of the square.

SAM

I wish I woulda been a better  
father to you though. Given you  
something worth a damn.

ANANDA

You were, you did. You taught me to  
draw. AND, you initiated me, gave  
me my first mantra.

SAM

Yeah. Sorry 'bout that.

Ananda cracks open one of Sam's beers and slams it.

SAM (CONT'D)

Ananda, Adam's a good man. Find a  
way to tell him, you won't regret  
it.

ANANDA

I should get goin'. Come by mom's?  
I want you to meet Izzy.

They hug. Sam watches Ananda walk away.

SAM

(yells to her)  
Love you girl!

Ananda sits quietly by the shore drawing a rooster with a 17-  
inch cock and a giant smile, with her fingers, in the sand.

Finishing, she takes off all of her clothes, sets the leather  
book safely in her clothes and walks out into pond and swims  
to the other side. On the opposite shore, she lies on the  
sand, watching the clouds pass above.

SPLASH. Ananda turns, squinting into the sun.

ANANDA

Adam?

HEATHER (27), beautiful, blonde, swims to the shore, holding  
something above her head.

ANANDA (CONT'D)

Heather!

HEATHER

Here, take this, quick.

She hands Ananda a joint and climbs out wearing her panties and underwear.

Heather bends down and they kiss each other on the face.

HEATHER (CONT'D)

I heard you were lookin' for me.

ANANDA

Small fuckin' town. I'm actually waiting for someone.

HEATHER

Well, I'm here!

Ananda takes a hit and laughs.

ANANDA

You look hot. But I've already seen what's under those panties, girl.

(checking her out)

Wait, are you doing yoga now?

HEATHER

I teach it, bitch!

She strikes a pose. Ananda laughs.

ANANDA

Your parents must've shit! Don't tell me you're meditating now too, 'Townie girl'.

Heather shrugs.

HEATHER

Oh my GOD! I've missed you so much. You're like the only person in the world I can't find on Facebook.

\*  
\*

ANANDA

That's not by accident.

HEATHER

Holy crap, I can't believe you're a Mom!

ANANDA

I know.

\*

Ananda takes another hit. Heather leans against her.

\*

HEATHER

You better not've gotten married  
without me!

ANANDA

No!

HEATHER

Okay, then, who's the dad?

ANANDA

Can we not talk about that yet -- I  
try to block that part out.

HEATHER

Well you got a pretty adorable  
reminder.

Ananda smiles.

HEATHER (CONT'D)

You really did everything you said  
you would, huh?

ANANDA

I don't know about that, I imagined  
I'd be painting naked angels on the  
Cistine Chapel by now, but life  
doesn't always turn out the way you  
think, does it?

HEATHER

No it doesn't.  
(looking towards her  
drawing on the shore)  
Hey, you haven't lost your touch.

ANANDA

Thanks, first thing I've drawn in  
awhile that I actually like and  
it's being washed away as we speak.

She takes the joint back and hits it.

ANANDA (CONT'D)

It's like this town is some freaky  
well of creativity that I can only  
tap into here.

HEATHER

There might be something to that.

ANANDA

Wow, you HAVE changed.

(beat)

Turns out my real talent is in  
cheesy cartooned jerk-off material.

HEATHER

You always were good at turning  
everyone on.

ANANDA

No, it's lame. I get paid to sketch  
nude models doing random acts of  
obscenity to each other or  
things...

HEATHER

Sounds right up your alley.

ANANDA

Yeah, well, I have to write these  
garbage stories that go along with  
my sketches, and they actually  
publish the crap. Not the most  
fulfilling art...

HEATHER

Stories? Tell me one!

ANANDA

Really? Shit, okay. Hold on.

Ananda inhales and laughs, Heather giggles excitedly.

Ananda jumps in the water. When she comes up, she's serious. \*

ANANDA (CONT'D)

Ananda and her deliciously sexy  
friend, Heather, swim in the icy  
water, sun shining down on their  
bare, dripping, golden skin. \*

Heather squeals with laughter. Ananda pokes her breasts out  
of the water exaggerating her movements comically. \*

ANANDA (CONT'D)

Heather decides to get out, her  
breasts emerge from the water. \*  
Ananda follows, the water slips off  
her skin. Heather offers her a \*  
towel. As Ananda takes it, she \*  
accidentally touches her nipples to  
Heather's. \*

Heather's eyes get wider and wider.

ANANDA (CONT'D)

Suddenly, they don't feel the brisk  
air anymore as a warmth rushes over  
them. Ananda slides her hand across  
Heather's perky breasts as Heather  
places her warm lips on her best  
friend's...

\*  
\*  
\*  
\*  
\*  
\*

HEATHER

Ananda stop...

Ananda stops, looking into Heather's eyes.

HEATHER (CONT'D)

Adam and I are together now.

Both of them are quiet for a long time.

HEATHER (CONT'D)

You've been gone so long...

ANANDA

Yeah, I knew. It's cool. I'm happy  
for you.

There's an uncomfortable silence.

ANANDA (CONT'D)

Adam asked you to come?

HEATHER

No. I wanted to be the first to...

Ananda lets go of the dock and begins to float away. She  
looks up at the harsh sun.

ANANDA

It's getting late. I should get  
going. Luke's competing at the Dome  
and I don't wanna miss him.

HEATHER

You're upset. Stay, come on.

Ananda swims away. Heather watches her go, sadly.

Ananda walks the long walk up to the Dome, in her hand she  
holds the red moleskin.

\*

21 CONTINUED:

21

A line of men, wearing beige suits, and women, wearing multi-colored saris, wait to get in. Tabla drums and Vedic chanting filter out through the doors. \*

At the entrance, she's stopped by a woman. \*

BADGE CHECKER

Could I see your badge please?

FRED(58) sticks his head out of the Dome. He's tall and shares Luke's loving eyes, but he's pale and thin. \*

ANANDA

Dad, I was gonna come see you.

They hug tightly.

FRED \*

(to the badge checker)

Harmony, this is my daughter, Ananda, remember her? She just wants to watch her brother.

BADGE CHECKER

Oh, poor dear, go on in and just stand by the door. I won't tell anyone. \*

ANANDA

Stand by the door, great.

22 INT. GOLDEN DOME OF ENLIGHTENMENT - SHOE ROOM - DAY

22

Fred and Ananda walk in, stop at the mountain of Birkenstocks, that pile up inside the door, sit, and remove their shoes.

FRED \*

I've missed you sweetheart. \*

ANANDA \*

You, too, Dad. \*

FRED

I'm glad you're here to support your brother.

ANANDA

Yeah, me too. Hey dad? Have you seen Adam?

FRED

I'm sure he's here somewhere. You two must have a lot to... Guess you heard about your mom and Craig.

ANANDA

What a douche-bag.

FRED

Honey, we're in the Dome! SHHHH!

ANANDA

Sorry.

He looks her over.

FRED

Why don't you and the little one come over to the trailer tonight and have dinner with me? I can't wait to meet her, I hear she's as astonishing as you were at that age.

ANANDA

You're still in the trailer park, dad?

FRED

I get room, board and free meals, what more do I need?

ANANDA

You do all of the accounting for the movement and they pay you in *tofu*!

FRED

(proudly holds his badge)  
Plus a meditation badge. That's worth a lot you know.

(beat)

Look, no one's forcing me to devote my life to all of this.

\*  
\*

ANANDA

You're thin and pale. And I worry that you're lonely.

FRED

But, honey, I'm not. I have community here. Look around.



	Yellow (mm/dd/yyyy)	36.	
22	CONTINUED: (2)	22	
	They step into...		
23	INT. GOLDEN DOME OF ENLIGHTENMENT - DAY	23	*
	... the beautiful massive Dome.		
	Statues of Hindu Gods and Goddesses adorn the Dome. Hundreds of MEDITATORS sit waiting to watch the best yogic flyers. Dust hangs in the air.		
	Giant stacks of foam cover the floors and a A HALF DOZEN MEN OF ALL AGES sit cross-legged, eyes closed on one end of the Dome, waiting their turn to fly across. Luke is amongst them.		*
	ANANDA		
	Dad, I'm worried about Luke.		
	FRED		
	Luke's better than ever, swearheart. You'll see.		*
	Behind them, a FLYER begins.		
	Slowly, he tips back, then forward, rises up on his knees and begins to hop-bounce, cross-legged, from one end of the Dome to the other.		
	The crowd CHEERS. The Tabla drums ROAR.		
	ANANDA		*
	Will you come over to Mom's tonight? I want to sit down with the two of you to discuss Luke.		
	Fred's face is pained.		
	FRED		*
	Oh honey...		*
	ANANDA		*
	Mom promised me Craig won't be there.		
	(beat)		
	Don't you want to meet your granddaughter?		*
	FRED		*
	Of course I do honey, but... Honestly, you're the one we're worried about.		

ANANDA

Just come for me, please?

Fred smiles at her. He can't say no.

\*

Ananda spots Izzy on Adam's shoulders, with Nancy and Craig. She smiles at the sight of Adam and Izzy together.

ANANDA (CONT'D)

I'll see you tonight, at 6.

Ananda kisses her dad and crosses to Adam and Izzy, who is clapping enthusiastically, loving it. Ananda squeezes the red book in her hands and approaches Adam.

ANANDA (CONT'D)

Hey...

ADAM

(whispering)

She's wonderful.

Ananda smiles.

ANANDA

She is.

(then, serious:)

I needed to talk to you alone today.

ADAM

I'm sorry.

ANANDA

We're leaving tomorrow. Come over tonight, it's important. Bring Heather if you want.

Now it's Luke's turn to fly. He readies himself and closes his eyes. The crowd hushes.

\*

\*

When Luke flies, he goes higher than any of the others.

\*

Ananda watches, impressed with her brother's bizarre athleticism, she claps in spite of herself.

\*

\*

Luke almost reaches the end, the crowd erupts with applause, but Luke doubles over in pain, SCREAMING into the foam.

\*

NANCY

No! Luke! What's wrong!

23 CONTINUED: (2)

23

CRAIG

I knew he wasn't enlightened.

Luke slowly stretches out his hamstring as his family rushes to him. Ananda puts her arms around him.

LUKE

I think I got a cramp...

ANANDA

It's okay. Let's get you home.

Ananda helps Luke to his feet, gives her mom a look.

24 INT. LUKE'S ROOM - DAY

24

Luke lies on his bed staring up. Projected onto the ceiling are old tapes of Maharishi from the 60's.

Ananda stands next to his bed, stares up at the ceiling.

ANANDA

Where the fuck did you find these,  
the graveyard?

On the projected image: Maharishi Mahesh-Yogi sits on a stage, holding a flower, giving a beautiful message of peace. A sea of thousands of smiling faces watching him.

LUKE

Pretty amazing huh?

ANANDA

In a bizarrely nostalgic way...

Ananda looks at Luke, he's smiling, but his eyes are teary.

ANANDA (CONT'D)

Hey, hey, hey. Don't let that stuff  
get to you. You were under a lot of  
pressure today.

Ananda lies down next to him and they stare at the ceiling together. She puts her head on his shoulder.

ANANDA (CONT'D)

Oh my god, I do remember, this is  
the last time Maharishi came to  
town. Isn't it?

LUKE

Yeah. The day we told each other  
our mantras.

ANANDA

SHHHHIT! Oh my god, YES. Mom and  
Dad would die if they ever knew!

They laugh. An old truck pulls up outside. Ananda jumps up.

LUKE

Why is dad here?

ANANDA

I called a family meeting.

LUKE

Not about me?

ANANDA

Well... no, actually it's about me.

She stops, becomes quiet, listens to VOICES in the other  
room.

ANANDA (CONT'D)

Oh shit, is Craig still here!?

She exits the room in a hurry.

Ananda walks into the living room just as Fred is turning  
around and walking out the door.

Craig and Nancy stand in Indian garb being fitted for their  
wedding by AN INDIAN SEAMSTRESS (30).

ANANDA

Dad!

Fred turns back around.

FRED

Hey honey, this was a bad idea.  
We'll do it another time.

ANANDA

No! Dad!  
(to Nancy)  
Mom!

Fred turns around and walks out.

NANCY

We're almost done, it's our wedding attire, there was no other time.

ANANDA

Fuck, I asked you for ONE thing!  
(calling to her dad)  
DAD! Don't leave, please. Adam is about to be here and I wanna talk to you all together!

Izzy comes jumping across the room cross-legged like she's a yogic flyer, a long line of pillows line the floor.

CRAIG

Don't speak to your mother that way!

ANANDA

Craig, mind your own business.  
(to Izzy)  
Izzy, pstop that. Go into Luke's room for a few minutes angel.

NANCY

Oh, honey, Izzy's just having fun.

Izzy zoom-hops past them into the next room.

IZZY (O.S.)

*Anjalie!*

ANANDA

It's not fun, it's bullshit! Craig, you threw me out of school and ruined my life once. I'm not allowing you two to re-program my daughter with your fucked up philosophy too.

NANCY

Ananda! He didn't ruin your life! You can't blame everyone else for the way your life turned out.  
(then shaking her head)  
You just haven't found your Dharma yet sweetheart.

ANANDA

My Dharma is to get the hell out of town.

Adam and Heather walk through the open door.

NANCY

Look honey, let me give you and Craig a Jyotish Astrology reading, clear the bad karma. How does that sound?

ANANDA

Like a cold day in hell. I don't need my future read to know you're a traitor.

NANCY

You wouldn't behave like this if you were meditating regularly! There are people in the world who would do anything for a mantra and you just throw yours away.

ANANDA

Guess what mother? I don't even remember my mantra!

Nancy is stunned. This is a big fucking deal.

ADAM

Really?

Nancy steps up into Ananda's face as her entire outfit falls to the floor, leaving her standing in a slip, topless.

NANCY

You never would have been kicked out if you weren't such a slut in high school.

Ananda has tears in her eyes, she looks at Adam. And then at her mother devastated.

ANANDA

Adam and I were in love, and we were teenagers. He shouldn't have been spying on us. I spent the rest of my childhood in this town as an outcast because of him.

Sam walks in the door carrying a giant plastic Play Horsie.

SAM

Lookin' hot Nance!

Nancy quickly covers up herself. Sam sets the play horsie by the door.

SAM (CONT'D)

Bad time?

NANCY

Ananda was just telling us how in love she was with Adam.

SAM

Well, that's good for Izzy, parents should be in love, right?

Everyone looks at Sam, shocked.

SAM (CONT'D)

Did I say something wrong?

Ananda takes a deep breath.

ANANDA

No, Sam.

Ananda takes the red moleskin out and hands the paperwork to Adam.

ANANDA (CONT'D)

I had some wet dream that things would be different.

Adam's face changes as he reads the paper. Heather looks up at Ananda, betrayed. She runs from the room.

ANANDA (CONT'D)

Izzy needs a birth certificate for school. I thought it was time she meet her father, but things are obviously too complicated here. So, just sign it tonight so that Izzy can stay in school, and we can be on our way.

Craig and Nancy are stunned.

ANANDA (CONT'D)

(to Craig and Nancy)

You two keep your paws off Izzy, I don't want you fucking her up like you did Luke.

Ananda looks up and realizes that Luke has been standing there, listening to the whole thing.

25 CONTINUED: (4)

25

He runs out the front door.

ANANDA (CONT'D)

Luke...

Ananda drops the red book and chases after him.

26 EXT. RESIDENTIAL FAIRFIELD - NIGHT

26 \*

Ananda catches up to Luke a block away. He keeps walking.

ANANDA

Luke stop, I'm sorry. I didn't mean  
for you to hear that.

LUKE

You think I'm crazy.

ANANDA

I think you're incredibly gifted.  
But you scare me. And maybe all  
this talk of enlightenment's too  
much on you.

LUKE

You ever feel like you know  
everything and nothing at all, all  
at the same time?

ANANDA

See, that's what I mean.

Luke stops in front of a small old typical Iowa house. It's  
dark, empty, A HUGE OAK TREE towers next to it. He stares up.

ANANDA (CONT'D)

Oh my god, I almost didn't  
recognize it. No one's living here?

LUKE

Tenants moved out. Mom still owns  
it though.

ANANDA

It looks smaller.

Luke starts climbing up the tree.

LUKE

They're gonna sell it after the  
wedding. Unless...



ANANDA

Luke.

\*

\*

LUKE

This is your home, Ananda.

\*

\*

ANANDA

Please come down.

\*

\*

LUKE

Come up, just for a minute. You're  
leaving tomorrow.

Ananda sighs and climbs the tree.

27 EXT. BIG OAK TREE - DAY

27

She almost slips as she sits down next to Luke on the tree  
branch, he grabs her and steadies her.

ANANDA

Woooooow! Okay, I wanna get down.

LUKE

Wait, just be still for a second.

Perched on the tree branch, feet dangling, Ananda inhales and  
smiles. The wind blows gently. \*

ANANDA

I forgot how peaceful it can be up  
here.

LUKE

Ananda?

ANANDA

Yeah?

LUKE

I don't ever feel that, peace. I  
get glimpses of it in meditation.  
But then it's gone. It's like I'm  
being pulled in two different  
directions, by something inside of  
me that takes over. I'm afraid.

Ananda puts her arm around her brother.

ANANDA

I know you are Luke.

\*

LUKE

If I were enlightened, then...

ANANDA

You're perfect just the way you are.

They sit for a moment.

LUKE

I know you think this town is ridiculous and maybe parts of it are... But, I wish you could separate all of that from the meditation. It's the only thing that helps me. And these people, even if they're a bit cooky -- they're our family.

\*  
\*  
\*  
\*  
\*  
\*  
\*  
\*

ANANDA

I want you to start taking your meds again Luke. Will you? For me?

LUKE

I will if you start meditating again.

ANANDA

I can't promise that.

LUKE

All I'm asking is that you open your heart back up to us. You've changed, I miss you.

Both are silent a long moment. The sun begins to set.

\*

LUKE (CONT'D)

Why did you really come back?

ANANDA

I didn't want Izzy to go through life like I did, not knowing who she belongs to, being confused.

LUKE

Remember what you learned in kindergarten? When you got your first mantra?

ANANDA

I try not to.

LUKE

"To know your true self, to truly know that you are connected to everything is the solution to all problems." It's like... the first thing they teach us in school.

ANANDA

In TM meditation school Luke. The rest of the world learns the ABC's.

\*

LUKE

What good is knowing the ABC's or even who you belong to... if you don't know yourself Ananda? If you don't know that you are truly connected to everything else?

Ananda sits up.

ANANDA

(to herself)

Oh my god, Izzy.

Luke smiles.

ANANDA (CONT'D)

Come with me, I have an idea!

It's midnight. Ananda, Izzy, and Luke peer into a crack in the Dome door.

LUKE

We really shouldn't do this...

ANANDA

Sure, we should, right Izzy?

Izzy nods.

ANANDA (CONT'D)

Best time to come, whole place to ourselves.

Ananda pries the door open with a crow-bar.

29 INT. GOLDEN DOME OF ENLIGHTENMENT - NIGHT MONTAGE 29

Golden light penetrates the space, even in darkness. They take in the sanctity.

30 INT. GOLDEN DOME OF ENLIGHTENMENT - NIGHT 30

Ananda, Izzy, and Luke jump from one piece of foam to the next giggling. They fly in the air, flipping and flopping.

Eventually Ananda and Izzy plop down, exhausted, their heads touching each other's. They watch Luke meditate in the middle of the room.

ANANDA

Hey Izzy.

IZZY

Yeah Mom?

ANANDA

What do you think of Adam?

IZZY

I like him.

Ananda turns to face her daughter.

ANANDA

What would you think if I told you he was your father?

Izzy thinks a long, long time.

Ananda begins to get worried.

IZZY

I think... that I would like that.

Ananda breaks into a relieved smile.

31 EXT. DOWNTOWN ALLEYWAY WALL - MORNING 31

Ananda stands in a brick alley, covered in paint and sweat, barefoot in her old overalls, painting a GIANT MURAL of a naked boy, levitating. It's Luke.

With a peculiar smile on his face, his legs are crossed and he holds a giant Rooster which covers his genitals.

31 CONTINUED:

31

Izzy stands below her and paints a small mural next to her mom's: a self-portrait of her meditating (she has wings too).

Ananda puts the finishing touches on hers and under it, titles it: *"The Boy With The 17 inch Cock"*.

A smile washes over her face from ear to ear.

32 INT. ANANDA'S CHILDHOOD HOME - ANANDA'S OLD ROOM - MORNING 32

Ananda and Izzy pack their suitcases.

ANANDA

Don't forget any of your books.

Ananda hears HUSHED FIGHTING from the room next door.

33 INT. HALLWAY - MORNING

33

Ananda creeps down the hallway. The door to the guest room where Adam is now staying is open, just a crack. She can see Adam and Heather inside, Heather is crying.

ADAM

It's just... I've known her my whole life, Heather.

HEATHER

I've never been in your little club, no matter what I do.

(beat)

You made a commitment to me, or don't you remember?

ADAM

How was I supposed to know...

Heather catches a glimpse of Ananda spying outside. Ananda flinches away, but it's too late.

The door swings open and Heather SLAPS Ananda, hard.

HEATHER

You fuck up everyone's lives every time you come back.

She takes off down the hallway. Ananda is teary, stunned.

Adam approaches, unable to look at her.

ADAM

I'm sorry, I don't know what to say.

He hands her the red leather folder and takes off after Heather. Ananda opens it. The papers are signed.

She inhales sadly.

NANCY (O.S.)

Ananda?

Nancy runs into the hallway.

NANCY (CONT'D)

Is Luke with you?

ANANDA

He was with me at the Dome, said he was gonna practice flying until morning meditation.

NANCY

Your father just called. He wasn't there. No one's seen him and he's not in his room. He's never missed Morning Dome, ever.

Suddenly, a loud BILLOW of a train.

Ananda's face goes white. She pushes past Nancy, runs out of the house.

Ananda runs toward the railroad tracks as fast as she can.

As she approaches, Luke is seen sitting quietly, perfectly still in meditation.

A train comes straight for him, blowing its horn, unable to stop.

Ananda runs as fast as she can toward him.

CREDITS

## Appendix B: Artwork for Returning to Ananda



## Appendix C: Outline for Returning To Ananda

Returning to Ananda Outline  
Series Title: *Returning to Ananda*  
Title of Episode: *Returning to Ananda*

Format: made for HBO/Showtime Half Hour(no Commercials)

Logline Episode: A quirky, single mom, returns to the small unusual, town which she grew up in that happens to be the epicenter of Transcendental Meditation, so that her six year old daughter can meet her father.

### Act 1

#### SCENE 1: IZZY'S SCHOOL - DAY

**Focus Line: Ananda needs Izzy's Birth Certificate but she can't get it.**

Ananda is called into a meeting with her six year-old daughter, Izzy's school counselor. The counselor, a kind older woman, tells Ananda that Izzy had been awarded 'the best drawing' at school during an assembly that morning but when Izzy went up to accept the award she corrected the principal who called it a beautiful drawing of an orchid, saying in fact it was a vulva! The counselor tells Ananda that it's not Ananda's profession(a pornographic writer) that she thinks is making Izzy act out but the fact that she has never met her own father. She tells Ananda that when she went to pull Izzy's file, it was brought to her attention that she still has no birth certificate on file and Izzy won't be able to come back to school until Ananda produces one. Ananda tries to explain to the counselor that she never finished the paperwork for the birth certificate because she didn't want to tell Izzy's father that she was pregnant.

Ananda leaves the office, and Izzy and her walk through the school. Izzy asks her mom if she got her in trouble again. Ananda says, "no, but really Izzy?". Izzy is precocious and goofy, and sometimes does odd things just to get a reaction from adults. She's the kind of kid you feel like you have to talk to like an adult, and she never cries.

#### SCENE 2 EXT. TRAIN TRACKS - DAY (DREAM SEQUENCE)

**Focus Line: Establishes Ananda's connection to her brother and that this is no ordinary world we are entering.**

LUKE(17), Ananda's brother sits on train tracks in an unknown town. A look of perfect contentment washes over his face. Slowly, he begins to rise off the ground levitating. Then suddenly, the loud billow of a train, and then, the train rushes through him.

#### SCENE 3: ANANDA'S APARTMENT BROOKLYN - MORNING

**Focus Line:Ananda life is falling apart. She needs to go home.**

A cell phone rings under the pillow that Ananda's head is on, waking her up from her dream, she's disheveled and confused. A man's voice is on the other line. He asks her where she went, he 'woke up and she wasn't next to him in bed'. She whispers, telling



him that she got into bed with her daughter(Izzy), who is sleeping next to her. Then she looks up and a shirtless attractive but hungover and scruffy bearded young man on a cell phone(the man on the line) is standing by the door on his cell phone. Ananda gets up, not wanting Izzy to see him, and walks him to the door handing him his shirt. Now topless, Ananda opens the door for him to leave. He looks at her emasculated, realizing it was just a one night stand. As he walks away, she notices on the door, an eviction notice staring back at her.

## **Act II**

### **SCENE 4: INT. ANANDA'S CAR - DAY**

**Focus Line: Ananda decides to go to Fairfield and on the way, finds out that her mom is getting re-married married.**

Ananda + Izzy on highway on the way to Fairfield. She calls her brother, Luke, to tell him that they're coming. Her brother tells her that their mom is getting married but won't tell her to who. We get more of a picture of Ananda's relationship with her daughter here, they are close and playful. Izzy asks her mom how long they will be staying in Fairfield and Ananda tells her that they will only be there for a few days.

### **SCENE 5: INT. ANANDA'S CAR - DAY**

**Focus Line: This town is really weird!**

Arriving in Fairfield, they pass by the golden domes of enlightenment. We realize that this is no ordinary town. Izzy is in awe of the two giant golden domes and asks what people do in them. Ananda tells her that people meditate in them, twice a day because one day they believe that they will be able to fly if they do. Izzy wants to fly, she is in awe of this strange, new place. Ananda tells her that they won't be there long and not to trust everything she hears here!

### **SCENE 6: INT. ANANDA'S CHILDHOOD HOME - ENTRYWAY - DAY**

**Focus Line: Nancy is marrying Craig, Adam, the father of Izzy will become Ananda's step-brother!**

Ananda and Izzy drive through a neighborhood of strange houses which all have a stepfordish similarity, they look like typical american homes but they all have Indian adornments on the roofs and white fences built around them and they all have eastern entrances. When they enter her childhood home, it looks like an Indian Ceremony has invaded it in preparation for her mom's wedding. Ananda's mother Nancy is surprised and happy to see Ananda and finally meet her granddaughter but Ananda announces to her mom that she has changed her name to Amanda. Nancy laughs off her daughter's crazy notion to change her name and even gives Izzy a new Sanskrit name. Ananda finds out that her mother is marrying Craig, the principal of her middle school(her arch-nemesis). Craig kicked her out of private school when she was 13 for making out with his son, which subsequently ruined her teen years in her opinion. His son is Adam, the father of Izzy and her childhood sweetheart. If Craig marries her mom, he will be Ananda's step-brother. Nancy thinks that Ananda has come for the wedding and is happy but Ananda makes it clear that she will be gone by then, not wanting anything to do with their weird wedding.

### **SCENE 7: INT. ANANDA'S BEDROOM - DAY**

**Focus Line: Ananda tries to talk to Adam about Izzy but instead she realizes that he has taken her place in her family. Luke is introduced here too.**

Ananda asks Adam to come to talk to her in her old room, so she can tell him about Izzy. When they get to the room she realizes that he now lives in it. It freaks her out so she doesn't tell him. Adam leaves her alone to be in her old room, where many of her old photos and things are still up. Ananda and Izzy look the old photos. Luke, Ananda's brother enters and it's clear that they are close.

### **SCENE 8: INT. ANANDA'S CHILDHOOD HOME - DINING ROOM - NIGHT**

**Focus Line: Ananda considers sabotaging her mother's marriage to Craig by flirting with Adam, Luke acts manic, Nancy's agenda of Luke's enlightenment is exposed.**

Ananda has an uncomfortable, comical (vegan)dinner with her family(Luke, Adam, Nancy, Izzy and Craig). She decides maybe she should try to get Adam back to stop the wedding of her mom with Craig. Luke arrives at dinner dressed bizarrely and when Izzy asks why the turkey is made out of Tofu he tells her how it is necessary to practice non-violence, by not eating meat. Nancy praises him. Ananda rolls her eyes. Ananda notices Luke is acting strange and asks him if he is still taking his medication (for Bi-Polar disorder) but Nancy admits that he no longer needs it so long as he meditates regularly. Craig arrives at the dinner table and is a complete jerk. Nancy announces that Luke is going to be anointed as the first person in 2 decades recognized as enlightened by the TM community tomorrow at the Yogic Flying competition. Ananda accuses her mom of being like an obsessed *dance mom* when it comes to Luke's "enlightenment" and tells her she has gone too far and that if she doesn't chill out she could send Luke over the edge. Ananda can't stand to listen to anymore of this garbage so she leaves and asks Adam to meet her at the local bar.

### **Act III**

### **SCENE 9: INT. BAR - NIGHT**

**Focus Line:Ananda waits for Adam at the bar but he never shows up so she ends up reconnecting with her mentor, her ex-step-father and the "other side of the tracks" aspect of this town is exposed.**

Ananda arrives at the bar to meet Adam. She talks to the bartender, Ethan, a cute townie who remembers her from middle school. He clearly has a crush on her, she clearly doesn't remember him. Sam(Ananda's crazy alcoholic ex-step-father) shows up surprised and happy to see her, they reconnect. Sam represents what happens when you are outed from the community. Adam never shows up so Sam and Ananda walk out to the square for some fresh air.

### **SCENE 10: TOWN SQUARE - NIGHT**

**Focus Line: Ananda is counseled on how to tell her family about Adam and Izzy in the picturesque town square, but they are interrupted by Luke's Manic actions.**

Ananda tells Sam about the father issue with Izzy. Sam convinces her that she should have a family meeting and just get it out there. Ananda agrees and invites Sam to the meeting, feeling sorry for him cause he is after all still part of the family, in her eyes. Sam tells Ananda how good it is to have her back(she is the only family he has ever had) but Ananda assures him that she is NOT back. Then, in the middle of their reminiscing, Luke shows up, in a pickup truck, releases over 100 chickens from the bed of his truck, onto the town square, that he has kidnapped from the Anderson Chicken farm. He chases them down the street, naked, screaming, "Vegan is Godly". Ananda runs after him.

#### **SCENE 11: INT. ANANDA'S CHILDHOOD HOME - KITCHEN - MORNING**

**Focus Line: Ananda tries to leave the house to go talk to her dad about the meeting about Adam and confronts her mom about Luke.**

Ananda wakes up wanting coffee and finds Nancy and Izzy bonding in the kitchen. All Nancy has is tea. She confronts her mom about Luke, her mom says that she doesn't blame Luke for releasing the chickens, that he is just more sensitive to violence because he is enlightened. She tells her mom that she wants to have a family meeting tonight (but doesn't tell her that it's to discuss Izzy's paternity) and to please make sure Craig isn't there so that her dad, Fred, can come over.

#### **SCENE 12: EXT. HEATHER'S FRONT PORCH - DAY**

**Focus Line: Ananda tries to find her old best friend so that she can talk to her about the Izzy/Adam dilemma.**

On the way to her dad's house, Ananda crosses the tracks and stops by her old best-friend, Heather's house, it's run down and decrepit, to find her but she isn't home. Ananda leaves a note that she is in town and wants to see her.

#### **SCENE 13: GROCERY STORE - DAY**

**Focus Line: Ananda is confronted with her own failures.**

Ananda goes to the grocery store to try to buy some meat and coffee, she runs into a meditator girl, same age as her, who she hated in high school. The girl was the perfect meditator, and ended up marrying the guy who's kids she babysat for in high school, she represents what Ananda would have been had she stayed in Fairfield. Ananda lies about how successful she is. When trying to use the food stamps that Sam had given her the night before at the check-out counter, she chickens out and writes a hot check.

#### **SCENE 14: FRED'S TRAILER - UTOPIA PARK - DAY**

**Focus Line: Ananda invites her father to the meeting that evening.**

Ananda helps her dad, Fred, make tofu while they reconnect. Ananda tells her dad that she is worried about Luke but her dad seems to agree with Nancy, that Luke is fine and changes the subject, saying he is worried about her. "She's the one who never visits or calls and then comes home after 6 years with a daughter". Ananda asks Fred to come over to Nancy's tonight because she is going to announce something important. Fred feels uncomfortable around Craig and doesn't want to come but can't say no to Ananda. He tells her he will if she'll come see Luke's Yogic flying competition later that day.

## **SCENE 15: EXT. POND - DAY**

**Focus Line: Ananda confesses to her best friend about her failures but doesn't know that her best friend is now in a relationship with the father of her child.**

Ananda goes for a swim(naked). Heather, her childhood friend shows up. She confesses to Heather how her life didn't turn out how she imagined and tells her about her writing pornography instead of films or books like she had dreamed of. Heather is supportive and sweet and funny but something has changed about her. She is no longer the townie girl that Ananda once knew, she is a yoga instructor now and even meditates. Heather, happy to have her best friend back, asks Ananda how long she'll be staying and Ananda assures her that she's leaving in a day or two. Ananda begins to tell Heather the news about Izzy's father when Fred comes out and interrupts, telling her that it's time to go. She leaves in a rush but tells Heather she has an announcement and invites Heather over to the house tonight.

## **Scene 16: EXT./INT. GOLDEN DOME - DAY**

**Focus Line: Ananda watches Luke woo the town with his flying abilities because she promised her dad she would so that he would come over, we see Adam and Heather together.**

Ananda and Fred watch Luke's bizarre athleticism at the flying competition as Luke and a half a dozen other men sit cross-legged on giant stacks of foam and hop from one end of the dome to the other catching small amounts of air as they do. Ananda can't help but applaud for her brother as he is the highest flyer. On the other side of the dome, Adam, Nancy, Craig and HEATHER(who is clearly romantically involved with Adam) watch too. Ananda doesn't see Adam and Heather together.

## **Act IV**

## **SCENE 17: INT. ANANDA'S CHILDHOOD HOME - LUKE'S ROOM - EVENING**

**Focus Line: Ananda tries to get Luke to come out of his room to talk to the family and is reminded of some of the sweetness of the meditation community that she so despises.**

Ananda goes into Luke's room and asks him to join them in the living room for the family meeting. Luke is laying on the bed watching old Maharishi tapes projected on his ceiling from the 70's, Ananda lies with him for a minute and it seems for a second she remembers what is so special about TM. Luke reminds her that the day that the tape they are watching was made was when Maharishi visited Fairfield and that it was the day that they told each other their mantras, something you NEVER do! Ananda laughs and says that's probably why they're so connected. Fred pulls up outside, Ananda runs into the living room to meet him and intercept to make sure Craig doesn't spook him.

## **Scene 18: INT. ANANDA'S CHILDHOOD HOME - EVENING (Climax)**

**Focus Line: Ananda's plans fall apart and she hurts the one person she doesn't want to, Luke.**

Ananda enters the living room where Nancy and Craig are being fitted by a seamstress in their wedding attire(Indian Sari's and garb and what not), Fred has just walked in but decides he should leave, that it's too weird for him to be there with Craig there too.

Ananda protests trying to get him to stay and Craig to leave but he leaves anyway and just as he is walking out Sam walks in with a huge play horsie for Izzy which only makes Fred feel even worse. Then, Izzy enters, cross-legged, hoping from one end of the room to the other on pillows that she has lined up calling herself by her new name. Ananda blames Craig for ruining her teen years and now destroying her family. Nancy and her get into a full on fight and Ananda tells Nancy(who's now standing topless cause her pinned Sari has fallen off) that she doesn't even remember her meditation Mantra! Nancy tells Ananda that Adam and Heather are together just as Heather and Adam are walking in the door and then tells Ananda that it's not Craig's fault that she was a slut in high school. Ananda is devastated and accuses Nancy and Craig of forcing Luke into a state of psychotic behavior and tells them she won't let them do the same to Izzy(who's hopped into the other room by now). It's quiet and then Ananda realizes that Luke has been standing there the whole time. Luke runs out of the house hurt. Ananda runs after him feeling terrible for saying that in front of him.

#### **SCENE 19: EXT. STREETS OF FAIRFIELD - MAGIC HOUR**

**Focus Line: Ananda chases after Luke to apologize.**

Ananda chases after Luke on the street for several blocks, apologizing. Luke is hurt that she thinks he is crazy. Ananda tells him that she is just worried about him. They end up standing in front of the small old house that her and Luke were both born in but has been a rental for several years now. Ananda is taken back by the old house, she didn't even recognize it at first. Luke tells her that they are going to sell it, unless she wants to move back. With his big puppy dog eyes. Ananda says she can't live in this town. Luke climbs up into the big old oak tree, where they used to always play as kids.

#### **SCENE 20: EXT. BIG OAK TREE - MAGIC HOUR**

**Focus Line: Luke helps Ananda see that she is being too hard on everyone and the town.**

Ananda climbs up into the tree too. She tells Luke how worried she is about him. Luke tells her that his condition makes him feel like he wants to die some days because he doesn't have control of his thoughts, but that TM is the only thing that makes him feel even a little sane. He help her realize that maybe she has been too hard on everyone and reminds her that these people and this town, while they may be a little cooky, they are her family and they love her no matter what. Ananda thinks about this deeply. She admits to Luke about her dilemma with Adam and Luke encourages her to meditate on it, that if she is clearer in her own self that things will naturally work themselves out. There is a glimmer of hope that Ananda will open her heart to the town again. She gets an idea.

#### **SCENE 21: INT. ADAM'S ROOM - NIGHT**

**Focus Line: Ananda tries to make amends in her own way and accepts Adam and Heather's relationship.**

Ananda, Luke and Izzy wake Adam and Heather up int he middle of the night.

## **SCENE 22: GOLDEN DOME OF ENLIGHTENMENT - NIGHT**

**Focus Line: Ananda sees Izzy play with Adam and sees how happy she is.**

Ananda, Izzy, Adam, Luke, and Heather all jump on the foam in the dome. This is something she has always wanted to do. Ananda watches as Izzy plays with Luke and Adam, there is something sweet about watching Izzy around Adam. Ananda apologizes to Heather for being childish and selfish and tells her that she wants nothing more than for her and Adam to be happy. She tells her that she is leaving tomorrow and wants to talk to Adam and Heather before she does but before she does that there is one more thing she needs to do first...

## **SCENE 23: 'C' STREET HOUSE LIVING ROOM - DAY**

**Focus Line: Ananda lets meditation and the town back into her heart by getting re-initiated. Luke's crisis is revealed.**

the next morning, Ananda sits cross legged silent and peaceful as sun streams across her face. Incense burns, she is getting re-initiated by Sam so that she can remember her mantra, in a small ceremony. Sam encourages her to try and remember her mantra on her own. Ananda becomes frustrated and says she can't but then finally after some encouragement from Sam who tells her that her mantra is always there for her, "it's just like coming home", she remembers it! She whispers it into Sam's ear and Sam tells her, "Yes, that's it." Ananda transcends for the first time in years, she leaves her body, levitating right off the old wooden floor, above the small old house and high above Fairfield feeling free and blissful. Just then, Nancy and Fred bust through the door and announce that Luke didn't come home last night. Ananda, back in her body, jumps up and burst out of the house.

## **SCENE 24: STREETS OF FAIRFIELD NEAR TRACKS - DAY**

**Focus Line: Ananda realizes that her dream was a premonition.**

Ananda runs to the railroad tracks where she finds Luke sitting quietly, content, perfectly still in meditation as a train comes straight for him, blowing it's horn unable to stop. Ananda runs as fast as she can towards him.

**END EPISODE**

### **SCENE 1 – INTRO, Tracks, Fairfield**

- 1A. Aerial Shot
- 1B. Railroad Track

### **SCENE 2 – Luke Flies, Ananda runs to him**

(Figure out levitation/green-screen \*\*\*NOTE – Include Ananda shots on same day)

- 2A. Ultra Wide Master, Profile – 18mm, Luke sits meditating on the tracks.
- 2B. Train Plate
- 2C. Luke Green Screen Plate
- 2D. Slow Push on Luke to MS/MCU
- 2E. POV Luke, Slow push on railroad towards train

### **SCENE 3 – Elementary School**

- 3A. MS – Opening shot – Symmetric (3–4 shot with teacher)
- 3B. Pull out from CU of painting to show Botox women in profile, framing the painting with their chests.
- 3C. MS – Ananda, Reverse of opening shot
- 3D. Wide Master from Corner of Classroom (spinning) – (7 people in shot, two moms leave)
- 3E. MS – Botox Mom
- 3F. MS – Boob Job Mom
- 3G. MS – OTS Ananda (coverage for dialogue with the teacher)
- 3H. MS – OTS Teacher (reverse dialogue coverage)
- 3J. WS – Long Lens Izzie pours tea

### **SCENE 4: School Hallway**

- 4A. EWS – from behind, Izzy and Ananda walk down the hall
- 4B. CU – Izzy kisses Ananda

### **SCENE 5: Izzy Sleeps Soundly**

- 5A. MS – Long Lens of Izzy sleeping in trailer while Ananda paints, hand and brush soft in the foreground, rack focus to Ananda's hand

### **SCENE 6: Ananda Paints Model, They talk about Izzy's problem**

- 6A. EWS – Master, Long Lens (100mm), include entire trailer NOTE\*\*\*  
Include shot of both women sleeping in the bed
- 6B. MS – Ananda OTS
- 6C. MS – Model OTS
- 6D. CU – Ananda OTS
- 6E. CU – Model OTS
- 6F. CU – Insert, Painting, Model in the background

**SCENE 7: Model wakes up alone**

7A. MS – 2 Shot, Ananda and Izzy asleep in the bed

7B. MS – Reverse shot on model in the doorway

**SCENE 8:**

8A Steadicam – Ananda and Model walk out to gate and say goodbye

**Scene 9: Ananda finds Birth Certificate**

9A MCU-CU push on the Dana Dolly and tilt to show certificate in red journal

**SCENE 10: Ananda and Izzy pee on side of road, calls Luke**

10A. EWS – Master, Ananda dials Luke while Izzy pees behind the car, cars going by in the background.

10B. CU – Insert, phone, calling Luke

10C. MCU – Ananda on the phone, Izzy POV

10D. MCU – Izzy on the ground peeing

10E. CU – Izzy's urine approaches Ananda's feet

**SCENE 11: Montage of Driving into FF and Ananda and Izzy Drive in (SETUPS=10)**

11A. POV CUTAWAYS, DRIVE BY's

11A.1 Endless field of corn

11A.2 Grain elevator

11A.3 Soy bean farms

11B. EXT. DRIVING SHOTS

11B.1 Lateral Dolly past Fairfield sign

11B.2 Car drives past dome, Izzy seen in back window amazed

11B.3 Cookie Cutter Neighborhood

11B.4 Car parks in driveway

11C. MCU – IZZY in backseat through rear view mirror

11D. CU – Ananda in the rear view mirror

11E. MCU – IZZY Profile

11F. MCU – Ananda Profile

11G. MCU – Radio, Izzy's POV

**SCENE 12 – Ananda and Izzy Enter: Nancy's House**

12A. MCU – Ananda cracks open the door

12B. MS – WS – Dana Dolly, push, low angle, reveal painting above them

12C. WS – Master, 3 shot, Incense or Candle could be soft in the foreground (\*\*Could use this to transition into kitchen on Dana Dolly)

12D. MS – Clean, Ananda



- 12E. MS – Clean, Nancy
- 12F. MS – Clean, Izzy (Until Nancy scoops her up)

### **SCENE 13 – The Kitchen**

- 13A. WS – Master of kitchen scene with Adam
- 13B. M2S – Izzy's POV of **Ananda and Adam**, goes through entire scene
- 13C. MS – of Izzy, from Ananda POV, turns into a 2 shot as Adam bends down to introduce himself to Izzy
- 13D. MS – Nancy on long lens in distance while she makes tea and interrupts
- 13E. MCU – OTS – Ananda for entire dialogue
- 13F. MS – OTS – Nancy after she returns with tea
- 13G. MS – OTS – Adam during conversation (NOTE\*\*\* – Combine the hugging shot for Adam's single)

### **SCENE 14 – Ananda's Room**

- 14A. MCU – Ananda's face, Adam pops up in the background
- 14B. WS – Ananda's POV of the room, push in and pan on Dana Dolly
- 14C. WS – Master Proscenium, symmetrical, from behind Ananda and Adam as they look at the wall of photos, then back at each other in profile. Can hold on this shot through the rest of the dialogue.
- 14D. WS – Master Reverse
- 14E. CU – Insert of picture when Izzy grabs it (NOT when Adam grabs it)
- 14F. CU – OTS – Handheld, Ananda
- 14G. CU – OTS – Handheld, Adam
- 14H. CU – OTS – Handheld, Luke
- 14J. CU – OTS – Handheld, Izzy

### **SCENE 15 – Dining room scene**

- 15A. WS – Entire scene
- 15B. MS – OTS – Nancy as she cuts turkey and talks (Nancy is always standing)
- 15C. M2S – OTS – Luke & Izzy during conversation
- 15D. MS – OTS – Ananda
- 15E. MS – OTS – Craig

### **SCENE 16 – The Bar Scene**

- 16A. CU – Revolving dolly shot around cigarette lighting and journal, to reveal Ethan as he delivers his first line
- 16B. WS – Master, dana dolly, of Ethan and Ananda
- 16C. WS – Master, dana dolly, of Ananda and Adam after he sits down and into the dancing scene
- 16D. MCU – Ananda at the bar with Adam

- 16E. MCU – Adam at the bar with Ananda
- 16F. MCU – Ethan as he eavesdrops on the conversation between Adam and Ananda
- 16G. CU – Ananda while dancing
- 16H. CU – Adam while dancing
- 16J. M2S – Master of dancing scene, Ethan in the background, will pull out (dana) towards the end of the scene to reveal Luke's naked ass at the end
- 16K. MS – Handheld roving singles of Adam, Ananda, and Ethan
- 16L. MS – Handheld single of Luke
- 16M. WS – Handheld master of all

### **SCENE 17 – The Kitchen**

- 17A. ELS – Master, dana, Rooster in focus, characters in background, rack focus
- 17B. MCU – Nancy
- 17C. MCU – Ananda
- 17D. MCU – Izzy with rooster (2-shot)
- 17E. CU – Nancy's face, Ananda and Izzy in the background

### **SCENE 18 – Quickie Mart**

- 18A. ECU – Coffee being poured, proprietor walks into the background
- 18B. MCU – Ananda, sticks
- 18C. MCU – Sam, sticks, with proprietor in the background (we can rack to proprietor as necessary for his lines)
- 18D. WS – Master of scene, grocery items peppered soft focus in foreground

### **SCENE 19 – Town Square**

- 19A. Steadicam – From behind, that falls off and stays at the edge of the square and turns into the wideshot master of the gazebo scene
- 19B. Steadicam – From in front of the characters, facing the them, stays with characters into the gazebo
- 19C. Singles of each in the gazebo with the steadicam

### **SCENE 20 – POND**

- 20A. WS – Overhead, drawing in the sand, Ananda begins to remove her clothing
- 20B. ECU – Long lens, Ananda's feet in the sand, and items of clothing falling into the frame, as she walks out of focus to the lake.
- 20C. ECU – Ananda's eyes as she lays in the sand, camera tilted perpendicular to the ground

20D. WS – POV of Ananda of the lake and the sky reflected in it, as Heather enters this frame  
20E. MS – 2S, master from behind, Ananda and Heather sit facing the lake, chatting  
20F. CU – Ananda in the water away from Heather  
20G. CU – Heather on the bank while talking to Ananda in the water

#### **SCENE 21 – EXT. Golden Dome**

21A. Steadicam – Follow Ananda up to the front door of the dome.

#### **SCENE 22–23 – INT. Golden Dome**

22/23A. WS – Master, of the shoe room scene, push in from behind on the dana dolly through the door revealing the dome and Fred, they turn into profile for the discussion that follows and this becomes the 2S master of the conversation in the dome

22/23B. 5 Cutaways – Luke prepping, a flyer begins to fly, Izzy on Adam's shoulders (use this shot when Ananda comes over to them as the 3S MS, otherwise known as shot 119) , featured extras in the dome prepping for flying

1. MCU – Ananda
2. MCU – Fred
3. MS – 3S, Ananda, Adam and Izzy
4. WS – Low angle on dana dolly of Luke flying across the mattresses
5. MS – 2S Nancy & Craig after Luke gets injured
6. MS – 2S Luke and Ananda to end the scene after the injury

#### **SCENE 24 – Luke's Room**

24A. MS – Ceiling, Luke's POV

24B. CU – Low angle, Luke's perspective, slightly dutch so you can see part of the projected image above her and on her. Ananda when she enters the room, staring up at the ceiling, leans over Luke and gets some projected light spill on her face

24C. MCU – Birdseye, Reverse on Luke's face

24D. M2S – Birdseye, Ananda and Luke

24E. MS – Ananda walks to the window

#### **SCENE 25 – The Fight Scene**

25A. WS – Master, Handheld entire scene

25B. MCU – Ananda

25C. CU – Ananda

25D. M3S – Craig and Nancy, & seamstress

25E. MS – Fred  
25F. CU – Nancy  
25G. MCU – Sam  
25H. CU – Izzy (right before she leaves the room)  
25J. MCU – Luke  
25K. M2S – Adam and Heather as they enter  
25L. CU – Adam as he sees the paper and realizes he's the father  
25M. ECU – Insert of the birth certificate

#### SCENE 26 – Residential Fairfield

26A. Steadicam – walking conversation all the way up to the oak tree, starts in Ananda's POV  
26B. Steadicam – walking conversation from the front up to the oak tree, turns into 2S wide master of the entire scene  
26C. WS – Master from under the tree on the ground  
26D. CU – Long lens from the ground on Luke  
26E. CU – Long lens from the ground on Ananda  
26F. MS – 2S Long lens from the ground looking up to the tree

#### SCENE 27 – BIG OAK TREE?????

#### SCENE 29/30 – EXT The dome (night)BREAKIN

7. MS – 3S Master of them breaking into the dome
8. MS – 3S Silhouetted master inside the dome at night
9. CU – Ananda and Izzy laying down, Luke meditating in the background

#### SCENE 31 – The Mural

31A. CU – Ananda's finishing touches with the paintbrush on the mural  
31B. EWS – from low angle, Ananda and Izzy stand in front of the finished mural

#### SCENE 32 – Amanda's old room packing suitcases

32A. Handheld CU of Izzy as we follow her to the other room after packing her suitcase, this shot reveals Adam and Heather in the other bedroom

#### SCENE 33 – Hallway/Room peeking

10. CU – Handheld of Ananda peeks through the door
11. MS – 2S Adam and Heather in the room

12. WS – 3S Master in the hallway of Ananda, Adam, and Nancy
13. ECU – Insert, Ananda hands Adam the red journal

SCENE 34 – Ananda runs to tracks

14. Steadicam – Ananda runs to the tracks
15. Steadicam – Ananda's POV running towards Luke on the tracks

## **Appendix E Working Cast and Crew Credits: Returning To Ananda**

### **RTA CAST/CREW CREDITS**

(This is a working credit list and does not include a final music list or all extras)

Directed By:	Déjà Bernhardt-Leazer
Written By:	Déjà Bernhardt-Leazer and Britta Lundin
Produced By:	Déjà Bernhardt-Leazer Donald Revolinski
Produced By:	Irene Georgiades Mystie Pineda
Director of Cinematography:	Patrick Smith
Casting By:	Brock&Allen Casting
Film Score by:	Nathan Efstation
Edited By:	Victoria Chalk Déjà Bernhardt-Leazer
Production Designers:	ATX UNIT: Emily Haueisen Fairfield UNIT: Claire White

### **CAST**

Ananda	Déjà C. Bernhardt-Leazer
Luke	Devin Bonnée
Izzy	Ilana Preslee
Nancy	Libby Villari
Adam	Denton Everett
Heather	Liz Kimball
Sam	Gerald Brodin
Fred	Tony Sears
Craig	Vincent Doenges
Ananda's Girlfriend(Model)	Mykal Monroe
Ethan (Bartender)	Chris Osborn
Teacher	Susan Roberts

Quicke Mart Proprietor  
boob Job Mom  
Botox Mom  
Harmony(Badge Checker)  
Radio Personalities(as self)

Hot Girl in Street

Paradheep Chhalliy  
Jill Tyson Cajkowski  
Hannah Dalton  
Toni Cobb-Brock  
Dennis Raimondi  
Donald Revolinski  
Jonina Thorsteindottir

### **Featured Extras**

Seamstress  
Daughter #1  
Daughter #2  
Yogic Fliers

Lakshmi Samudrala  
Avi Lake  
Eliza Jarrett  
Anne Haskett  
Emma Purvis  
Vasanth Venkatachalam  
Zhouie Bernhardt  
Ellie Edwards  
Erica Pallo  
Lynn Ovington  
Lauren Bray  
Carmen Hilbert  
Marandah Franke

Bar

Taylor Brock  
Jon Estrin  
Lisa Jarvis  
Nathan Efstation

Executive Producers:

Clint Leazer  
Déjà Bernhardt-Leazer

Assistant Producers:

Christopher Casanova  
Mike Quinn  
Shila Farahni

First Assistant Directors:

ATX UNIT: Annie Silverstein  
Fairfield Unit: Micheal Roberson

Second Assistant Director:

ATX Michael Roberson

First Assistant Camera:

Nathan Efstation

Second Assistant Cameras:

Erica Pallo  
Rigel Benton  
Nathan Duncan

DIT/DAILIES	ATX Unit: Rigel Benton Fairfield Unit: Erica Pallo
Gaffer:	Carmen Hilbert
G&E Department:	ATX Unit: Morgan Bond Aaron Berecka Brittany Reeber Mariam Aziz Erica Pallo  Fairfield Unit: Wissile Sogoyou Cullen Thomas Matthew Johnson
Acting Coaches:	Toni Cobb-Brock Sally Allen
Digital Art Design:	Zion Pau Shun Lee
SPFX: Titles + Credits:	Lee Mendez Lee Mendez
Steadicam	ATX Unit: Patrick Neese Fairfield Unit: Camrin Petramale
Additional Cinematography:	ATX Unit: Carmen Hilbert Therese Tran  Fairfield Unit: Cullen Thomas Donald Revolinski
Makeup	ATX Unit: Leola Perez Fairfield Unit: Marandah Franke
Wardrobe:	Kelly Decker
Production Sound Recording By:	Evan David Roberts
Assistant Sound:	Curtis Henderson
Boom Op:	Curtis Henderson



Script Supervisors:	ATX Unit: Mary Beth Holland Fairfield Unit: Claire White
Set Designer:	Claire White
Art Director:	Allie Lane
Scenic Painter ATX:	Emily Haueisen
Scenic Artist Iowa:	Claire White
Technical Director:	Samantha Kuh
Master Carpenter	Tyler Draker
Carpenter	Jackson McGovern
Carpenter	James Bader
Artists For Ananda's Art:	Genevra Bell Kevin Harger Claire White
Sizzle Reel Editor	Rigel Benton
Associate Producer:	Jonina Thorsteindottir Bruce Grady
PA/Set Photographer:	Sarah Larson
Post Sound Design:	Rui Silva
Score Vocals:	Miku Khezri
Foley Artists:	Rui Silva Elaine Hurt Sara Joyner
ADR:	Rui Silva Brad Engleking
Final Mix:	Brad Engleking
Music Supervisor:	Dominique Preyer Hear It - Clear It Music Supervision
Color Timing:	Daniel Styuck
Production Assistants:	April McKay Alexandria Walters Maria Ayala Paul Neumann Molly McMichael

	Taylor Elizabeth Brock Sarah Larson
Behind the Scenes Video:	ATX Unit: Francis Andrew Butler Fairfield Unit: Wissile Sogoyou
BTS/Production Photography:	ATX: Nimai Malle ATX Unit: Francis Andrew Butler Fairfield Unit: Sarah Larson
Rooster Wranglers:	ATX Unit: Sherry Colvin Fairfield Unit: Lewis Thomes
Rooster Casting:	ATX Unit: Sally Allen Irene Georghiades Fairfield Unit: Donald Revolinski
Sponsors	Buddhas Brew Kombucha In Step - The Birkenstock's Store
Thesis Committee:	Supervisor: Cindy McCreery Andy Garrison Charles Ramirez-Berg Richard Lewis
Special Thanks	Clint Leazer Zhouie Martinez Bernhardt PJ Raval - And the RTF Production Thesis Class of 2012/2013 Curran Nault UT RTF Maharishi University of Management The David Lynch Foundation Jerry Fischer The Red Rock Tavern Bob Lyons and the Fairfield Municipal Airport Quality Quick Stop Eanes ISD and Bridegpoint Elementary Kevin Flanagan and The City of Fairfield Pam Craff Alexandria Kurzen The Sondheim Center Rosie Estrin Texas Film Commission TexScouts Alicia Downard Kim Le Blanc

William Hemmerle  
Ken Chawkin  
Bruce Grady  
Victor Tichy  
Linda Cavage  
Lauren Stamps  
Susanne Kraft  
Jeremy Gruy  
Keefe Boerner  
Dereck Young  
Joe Hutson  
Jason Eitelbach  
Gloria Holder  
Bert Herigstad  
Charmarie Burke  
SAG East Linda Isrel  
Einstein's Bagels  
MPS Austin  
Alexis Scott  
Jack O'Brien and the Bright Light Social Hour

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